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## CONTENTS

### ARTICLES

- STANLEY K. ABE . . . . . Art and Practice in a Fifth-Century Chinese Buddhist Cave Temple . . . . . 1  
*San Francisco State University*
- PETER C. STURMAN . . . . . Cranes above Kaifeng: The Auspicious Image at the Court of Huizong . . . . . 33  
*University of California, Santa Barbara*
- HUI-SHU LEE . . . . . The Fish Leaves of the Anwan Album: Bada Shanren's Journeys  
*Yale University* to a Landscape of the Past. . . . . 69
- MARY F. LINDA . . . . . The Kalinga Temple Form. . . . . 87  
*University of Pennsylvania*
- ESTELLE WHELAN . . . . . Writing the Word of God: Some Early Qurʾān Manuscripts and Their Milieux, Part I . . . . . 113  
*Columbia University*
- ROBERT HILLENBRAND . . . . . Mamlūk and ʿIlkhānīd Bestiaries: Convention and Experiment. . . . . 149  
*University of Edinburgh*

### REVIEW ESSAY

- LEILA AVRIN . . . . . Illuminated Hebrew Manuscript Facsimiles . . . . . 189  
*The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

### BOOK REVIEWS

- SUSAN BUSH . . . . . *Contemplating the Ancients: Aesthetic and Social Issues in Early Chinese Portraiture,*  
*Cambridge, Massachusetts* by Audrey Spiro . . . . . 197
- JASON C. KUO . . . . . Recent Studies of Modern Chinese Painting. . . . . 198  
*University of Maryland at College Park*
- SHEILA S. BLAIR . . . . . *Persian Drawings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art,* by Marie Lukens Swietochowski  
*Richmond, New Hampshire* and Sussan Babaie . . . . . 200
- WALTER M. SPINK . . . . . *Hindu Temple Art of Orissa,* by Thomas E. Donaldson . . . . . 200  
*University of Michigan*



# ART AND PRACTICE IN A FIFTH-CENTURY CHINESE BUDDHIST CAVE TEMPLE

By STANLEY K. ABE

STUDIES OF BUDDHIST ART HAVE OFTEN FOCUSED ON THE TASK of aligning imagery with Buddhist texts. Buddhist art, however, functioned not only as an illustration of written text but as an integral element of ritual practice. This essay will explore the relationship between Buddhist art and practice in Cave 254, an early Chinese Buddhist cave temple from the Mogao cave site near Dunhuang in northwest China. My larger interest is to perceive the art and architecture of a complete religious sanctuary in terms of those who designed, produced, and used the space and its decoration. Practice and function are only a part of this inquiry. They are, however, central to the intentions of those who created Cave 254 and essential for an understanding of the art and architecture of such a cave temple.

## *Mogao Cave 254*

Cave 254, constructed sometime between C.E. 475 and 490, is the most completely preserved fifth-century cave at the Mogao site. As such, it offers us a unique opportunity to analyze an early Chinese Buddhist sanctuary as a whole. In Cave 254 we are presented with elements of painting, sculpture, and architecture in their original context as interrelated components of a single endeavor, a sharp contrast to other extant early Chinese Buddhist art, which consists for the most part of individual images and image groups lacking their original context or caves with major elements that are incompletely preserved.

Cave 254 is a large, rectangular excavation with a central pillar extending from floor to ceiling in the rear section (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> The ceiling is divided, a transverse gable section in the front and a flat section in the rear around the central pillar. Niches containing sculpted images are located on all four faces of the central pillar, under the apex of the gable ceiling on the front side walls of the cave, and along each of the rear side walls (Figs. 2–4). Painting originally covered every surface in the cave: the sculpture, the inside of the niches, the central pillar, walls, and ceilings.

The most striking characteristic of the cave is its symmetry. It is divided along an east-west axis from the center of the door to the rear wall, with each half of the cave almost perfectly mirroring the other in the placement of niches, sculpture, architectural forms, and registers of painting. The symmetry of the

cave strongly suggests an overall plan that was executed in its entirety, and this in turn reinforces the view that all major elements in the cave are contemporary.

Cave 254 features a square central pillar, located in the rear half of the cave, that contains the largest image (1.9 meters in height) in the cave in its front (east) niche (Fig. 2). Each of the remaining three faces contains two niches, one carved above the other. The pillar is essentially a cube of unexcavated stone, with its surface broken only by the image niches and the projecting ledge that encircles the circumference of the pillar.

The main icon in the cave is the seated Buddha with ankles crossed in the front face of the central pillar (Fig. 5). This image and the main image of Cave 268 are the only Buddhas with crossed ankles in the early Mogao caves. Many scholars believe the cross-ankled position of the legs generally indicates Maitreya.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the identification of the image is far from certain. Of the extant fifth- or early sixth-century Chinese Buddha images with crossed ankles, only one is named by inscription, and that one is identified as a Maitreya Buddha.<sup>3</sup>

A leading Japanese scholar of the Mogao caves, Higashiyama Kengō, has proposed that Buddhas with crossed ankles in the early Mogao caves, including Cave 254, are images of Śakyāmuni as the present Buddha juxtaposed with images of Maitreya bodhisattva, the future Buddha.<sup>4</sup> The proposal is based to a large extent on an iconographic pattern found at the central Asian site of Kizil, most clearly in Kizil Cave 80.<sup>5</sup> The lunette above the main niche features a Buddha with ankles crossed (Fig. 6).<sup>6</sup> The painting in the opposite lunette above the doorway, now largely effaced, once held a Maitreya bodhisattva with ankles crossed. Higashiyama suggests that Buddhist worshippers entered Cave 80 and in the front room viewed an image of Śakyāmuni along with narrative paintings related to his career and previous lives. They then moved into the left tunnel to circumambulate the main icon, encountered the *parinirvāṇa* scene in the rear room and were confronted with the depiction of Maitreya bodhisattva in Tusita Heaven in the lunette above the door upon returning to the main room via the right tunnel (Fig. 7). Devotees were thus exposed to a synoptic recapitulation of Śakyāmuni's life that concluded with a view of the future Buddha Maitreya waiting to descend from Tusita Heaven. The argument

for identifying the cross-ankled Buddha as Śakyāmuni is supported by the numerous representations of incidents from the life of Śakyāmuni on the ceiling that depict Śakyāmuni in the cross-ankled posture (Fig. 8).

The imagery in Cave 254 is consistent with the Śakyāmuni Buddha/Maitreya bodhisattva theme found in Kizil Cave 80. All of the narrative paintings in the cave depict events involving Śakyāmuni: Māra's Assault from Śakyāmuni's life story (Fig. 9), the Conversion of Nanda (by Śakyāmuni) *avadāna* (Fig. 10), and the Tiger *jātaka* and Śibi *jātaka* representing the good deeds of Śakyāmuni in previous incarnations (Figs. 11 and 12). Significantly, these paintings are placed in front of and at the same level as the cross-ankled Buddha. A pair of attendants to the Buddha image (Figs. 13 and 14), two bearded ascetics painted on the back wall of the image niche, also appear to refer to Śakyāmuni's career. The one to the left of the seated Buddha is holding a bird (Fig. 13) while the one to the right holds an indistinct object above his head (Fig. 14). The two figures are not uncommon in fifth-century Chinese Buddhist art and probably represent the brahmins Vasu on the left and Mrgaśīrsa on the right.<sup>7</sup> Vasu was a King of Kosala who sacrificed animals. He was converted by Śakyāmuni and is shown holding a bird, symbolic of preserving life. Mrgaśīrsa practiced the art of "skull spells," in which he tapped the skulls of the dead in order to ascertain their future life and is therefore depicted holding a skull. He was also converted by Śakyāmuni.<sup>8</sup>

In contrast to the imagery associated with Śakyāmuni in the lower section of Cave 254, the upper parts of the cave are dominated by celestial imagery and cross-ankled bodhisattvas. The unequivocal identification of the bodhisattva with crossed ankles as Maitreya strongly suggests that the upper portions of the cave are related to Maitreya bodhisattva and Tusita Heaven. The most plausible general explanation of the imagery in Cave 254 is that the front face and lower niches of the central pillar represent the world of Śakyāmuni while the upper part of the cave, which features four images of a bodhisattva with crossed ankles, represents Maitreya bodhisattva in Tusita Heaven.<sup>9</sup>

### *Buddhism at Dunhuang*

The practice of Buddhism at the Mogao site can be best understood in the context of a type of regional Buddhism, which I will refer to as "Liangzhou Buddhism," that developed in the area of present-day Gansu province during the fifth century.<sup>10</sup> The central figure in Liangzhou Buddhism was the Indian monk-translator Dharmakṣema (385–433), who arrived at

the Northern Liang capital of Guzang in 412 and translated texts under the sponsorship of Juqu Mengxun until 433.<sup>11</sup> Tsukamoto Zenryū summarized his contribution as follows:

Dharmakṣema's achievements were extraordinarily great as a proselytizer among the simple peoples of North China, to whom he brought not the theoretical, philosophical Buddhism of the Wei-Tsin era with its Prajñāpāramitā doctrine of insubstantiality, but a practical, concrete religion with an emphasis on the mystical powers of the Buddhas, the gods, and the mantras. His translations furthered the development of the ritual of penance, exerted an influence on Buddhist art, and spread the knowledge of Buddhist tales among the people.<sup>12</sup>

It should be noted from the outset that the work of Dharmakṣema and Liangzhou Buddhism as a whole shaped many important characteristics of Buddhist practice in northern China during the fifth century. The Northern Wei conquest of the Northern Liang dynasty had important historical consequences in this regard. The *Shilaozhi* states that with the transfer of residents from the capital of the Northern Liang to Pingcheng, "śramanas and Buddhist practices both went east, and both the images and the doctrine prospered more and more."<sup>13</sup> Therefore, Buddhist practices found in the area of Pingcheng after the relocation are often thought to have been transplanted from Liangzhou.<sup>14</sup> This is particularly true for those practices identified with the leader of Northern Wei Buddhism, Tanyao, who was active under the Northern Liang dynasty and is thought to have been included in the mass relocation to Pingcheng.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the relationship between Liangzhou Buddhism and the Buddhism of northern China as a whole after 439 was complex and intimate.

An important aspect of Liangzhou Buddhism was thaumaturgy. At Dunhuang, the importance of magic and its efficacy was no doubt heightened by the experiences of travelers crossing the great expanse of desert to and from the western regions. When the famous monk-pilgrim Faxian reached Dunhuang and faced the Taklamakan desert in 400, he reported: "in this desert there are evil spirits and hot winds that kill every man who encounters them. No birds fly there and no beasts roam. As far as the eye can see, no road is visible across the desert, and only the skeletons of those who have perished there serve to mark the way."<sup>16</sup> Confronted with these conditions, travelers and local residents alike recognized that "the desert was animate, the Silk Road alive with phantoms, and protective spiritual power was no idle, abstruse notion."<sup>17</sup>

Dharmakṣema was one of many Buddhist monks of this period who were adept at thaumaturgic practices. He was well versed in the use of *dhāraṇī* (incantations or spells), which were often employed for the benefit



of his patron, Juqu Mengxun.<sup>18</sup> Not surprisingly, a number of *dhāraṇī* texts are to be found among Dunhuang manuscripts of the fifth and sixth centuries. The Stein collection alone contains five examples of one such text, the *Da fang deng tou luo ni jing*, which was translated at Zhangye under the Northern Liang sometime between 402 and 413.<sup>19</sup> Another Dunhuang manuscript, with a Northern Liang regnal date corresponding to 422, contains a collection of *dhāraṇī* and a list of days that are “suitable for the remission of sin.”<sup>20</sup>

Penance and confession were also important aspects of Liangzhou Buddhism. Dharmakṣema, it is recorded, once became aware of demons entering the Northern Liang capital. He told Juqu Mengxun that he would first purify himself and celebrate the *uposatha*, a twice-monthly Vinaya practice in which transgressions against the monastic precepts are confessed, then recite *dhāraṇī* to expel the demons. After three days of invoking *dhāraṇī* the demons were defeated.<sup>21</sup> Rituals of confession and penance based on the *uposatha*, as we will see, were basic to many of the Buddhist practices associated with Cave 254 and even extended to practices taught to common lay adherents.

A concern with karmic action, arguably the central issue for early Chinese Buddhists, was the basis for many of the practices associated with Liangzhou Buddhism. The donation of images, votive *stūpas*, and *sūtras* was made with a sense of “karma-optimism,” a genuine conviction that such donations were both meritorious and efficacious. That this was a major interest for most Buddhist adherents, clergy or lay, of elite or common backgrounds, is clear from the textual evidence. An edict recorded in the *Shilaozhi*, undated but placed between entries dated to 472 and 473, states that

Men in both the interior and outlying areas are raising up meritorious works and erecting reliquaries and temples. . . . And yet the ignorant outdo one another, and the poor and rich vie with one another. . . . If one has a pure and pious mind, even though engaged in heaping earth and gathering sand, one's accumulated merit shall not perish. But they wish to create a cause for gaining merit while not yet knowing the effect of harming life.<sup>22</sup>

The goal of acquiring merit in order to better one's future incarnations or to influence positively the situation of deceased relatives and teachers is a recurring theme in Buddhist inscriptions throughout northern China. A typical example, the colophon to a Dunhuang manuscript from the early sixth century, records the donation of the text by a nun, who prays that

the merit accruing from this deed may first of all reach her teachers of the past kalpa and her parents of seven previous incarnations, and thereafter the beings of every description that possess sentient life, intelligence, or bodily form, that all living

things may share the blessings that flow therefrom. Furthermore, she prays that the myriad ills at present abiding within her door may disappear like melting ice, that all good things may come in their place, and that the four elements may remain in peace, giving rise to no calamities.<sup>23</sup>

Interestingly, this inscription includes the wish for an improvement in the present conditions of the donor's life as well as the usual references to parents, teachers, and all sentient beings.

The emphasis on karmic action is prominent in texts that were written expressly for common lay Buddhists such as the *Ti wei bo li jing* or the *Sūtra of Trapuśa and Bhallika*. This *sūtra* has a relationship to Liangzhou Buddhism in that it is attributed to a monk-associate of Tanyao named Tanjing.<sup>24</sup> It has been suggested that the *Sūtra of Trapuśa and Bhallika* was an attempt to educate the significant numbers of common people attached to Buddhist institutions as a result of the Sangha and Buddha households initiated by Tanyao.<sup>25</sup> In addition the text was closely related to *yi yi*, or Buddhist associations of common believers as described by Daoxuan in the *Xu Gao Seng Zhuan*: “In the early years of the K'ai-wang period [581–600], the people around Kuan-nei [the Wei River] still frequently practiced the T'i-wei cult. Members of this *i-i* [*yi yi*], would put on robes and hold bowls every fortnight, keeping the precepts and watching over each other. The cult is widespread with many followers.”<sup>26</sup> All of the above is consistent with the emphasis on the proselytization of the “simple peoples” credited to Dharmakṣema under the Northern Liang dynasty.

Lay people were also being taught karma-based lessons deeply imbued with the strange and miraculous through an early genre of Chinese fiction known as *Zhi guai*, or “recording the strange.” Collections of *Zhi guai* include Buddhist miracle tales—short works that were expressly didactic and emphasized karma and retribution. Typical stories, from the *Mingxiang ji* (*Records of Divine Omens*) of the late fifth century for example, record the experiences of lay people who have been summoned to the underworld and subsequently returned to life, whereupon they related their experiences. The results of actions taken in past lives, both good and bad, are central to the stories, which concern themselves with extolling the basic Buddhist virtues of good deeds, compassion, and respect for all living things.<sup>27</sup>

The popularity of meditative practices was another important characteristic of Liangzhou Buddhism. Dharmamitra, a Kashmiri monk and *dhyaṇa*-master who came to Dunhuang from Kucha and founded a temple at Dunhuang around the year 422,<sup>28</sup> subsequently stopped in Liangzhou (Guzang), where “his disciples were numerous and the practice of contemplation was

very earnestly pursued.<sup>29</sup> After reaching the territory of the Liu Song dynasty in southern China, Dharmamitra translated a number of texts that featured visualization and meditation practices.<sup>30</sup> Another *dhya*na-master, Huiquan, was reported to have five hundred pupils at Liangzhou at this time.<sup>31</sup>

A member of the Northern Liang ruling family, Juqu Jingsheng, was also involved in meditative practices. In his youth Juqu Jingsheng traveled to Khotan, studied under the meditation master Buddhasena, and returned to the Liang kingdom with a meditation text that he later translated. He also obtained at Gaochang a copy of a text on visualizing Maitreya, which will be discussed in detail below. With the Northern Wei invasion of the Northern Liang, Jingsheng fled south to the region of the Liu Song dynasty and eventually translated a total of fifteen texts that are preserved in the Chinese Buddhist Canon.<sup>32</sup> In the south he was also known for "propagating the cults of Maitreya and Avalokitesvara."<sup>33</sup>

The close relationship between meditative practices and the cult of Maitreya, another characteristic of Liangzhou Buddhism, can also be discerned in the biography of the Liangzhou monk, Huilan (d. 457–64), who studied meditation in Kashmir with Dharmadatta. The *Ming seng zhuan* states that in 427 Dharmadatta entered *samādhi* and received the ordination of a bodhisattva directly from Maitreya. Dharmadatta later conferred this ordination on Huilan, who in turn conferred it on multitudes of adepts in Khotan and Dunhuang.<sup>34</sup>

It is not surprising, then, that monks from Dunhuang were renowned for their Maitreya-related meditative practices, one such adept being Daofa (family name Cao, d. 474).<sup>35</sup> The *Ming seng zhuan* states that whenever Daofa

begged food or was served at a maigre feast, he would use part of his own portion to feed the insects and birds. He used to sit in meditation and chant, day and night without a halt. At night he would strip off his clothes before the image of Maitreya, to give the mosquitoes [*sic*] something to feed on. After several years had gone by in this way, he saw the Maitreya emit lights of various colors. As the lights turned white, he descended to Hell, where he saw all the actions of the past and the people who were suffering punishment for them. He was also an expert at reciting spells. He died in a trance in [474].<sup>36</sup>

The description of Daofa's practices aptly summarizes some of the key characteristics of Liangzhou Buddhism: the popularity of meditation and visualization rituals, the utilization of images to assist these practices, the central role of Maitreya, the use of spells and magic, and most importantly, the emphasis on the results of karmic action. As we will see below, the

practice of Buddhism at the Mogao site and the function of Cave 254 appear to have been consistent with what we know of Liangzhou Buddhism.

### *Buddhist Imagery in Liangzhou*

In a world replete with unexplainable events and supernatural powers, it is not surprising that Buddhist imagery played a major role within the complex of magic and efficacious ritual that was Buddhist practice. In the Liangzhou region there were a number of incidents in which images exhibited mystical powers. At the Buddhist cave site established south of the Northern Liang capital by Juqu Mengxun, it was reported that clay images of monks walked about. When dirt was spread around the statues to check on their movement, it was found that they left "the moist footprints of men coming and going without a halt."<sup>37</sup> In another incident, Dharmaksema was unable to avert the defeat of the Northern Liang in a military campaign against a neighboring state. Juqu Mengxun turned his anger on the Buddha and declared that all clergy under the age of fifty were to return to secular life. At this point, a stone image that Mengxun had constructed for the benefit of his deceased mother began to weep copiously. Heeding this omen, the ruler rescinded his order.<sup>38</sup>

There is also the story involving the monk Huida, who traveled to the area of Liangzhou (Guzang) in 435 and paid reverence to a certain valley. When questioned as to why he did this, Huida replied: "On that cliff an image is to appear. Should its wondrous body-signs be complete, the age will be a happy and peaceful one; but if anything be lacking, the world will be in turmoil and the people will suffer."<sup>39</sup> In the period between 519 and 524 the mountain referred to by Huida was said to have split open during a violent storm revealing a stone image. It, however, was headless and all of the replacement heads set on the image fell off. Soon after, the Northern Wei dynasty collapsed into chaos. In 559 a light appeared in a ravine outside of Liangzhou. When investigated, the light was found to be radiating from the head of the image. After some forty years the body-signs of the image were complete and there was peace. The head fell off the image in 572, however, and despite repeated attempts to reattach it, would not remain attached. Two years later Buddhism was proscribed by the Northern Zhou.<sup>40</sup>

Incidents of this kind were not limited to Liangzhou. All across the country during this period, Buddhist images were vibrant and animate. It was, to be sure, highly unusual, but for the Chinese Buddhist adherents, images responded to contemporary events with tears



and sweat, or functioned as a medium for predicting the future. Images were active aids for those who wished to visualize and come into contact with Śakyāmini, Maitreya, or any number of other Buddhas and bodhisattvas; they radiated light and assisted practitioners in traveling to various hells or heavens. For the maker and user alike, the supernatural powers exhibited by Buddhist images were fundamental to the way in which images were understood. The painting and sculpture in Cave 254 was much more than functional decoration. The imagery projected a reality of its own—one that was active, magical, and, if the image was correctly formed and appropriately used, supremely efficacious.

### *The Central Pillar and the Function of Cave 254*

Within the context of Liangzhou Buddhism, what types of Buddhist function does the interior of Cave 254 suggest? The ritual of circumambulation is commonly associated with the central pillar, insofar as the pillar is understood as a form of the Indian *stūpa* or Chinese pagoda, although extant Chinese Buddhist *sūtras* and biographies of monks from the fifth century contain surprisingly few references to circumambulation practices.<sup>41</sup> This suggests that circumambulation may have been only one of the rituals involved with central pillars in the fifth century.

In order to understand these other practices, it is first necessary to reexamine the significance of the central pillar. The conventional explanation of central pillars in early Chinese Buddhist caves is that they represent a *stūpa* or pagoda set inside a cave, the pagoda generally understood to be a Chinese adaptation of the Indian *stūpa*.<sup>42</sup> The central pillar in Chinese Buddhist caves is thus considered to be the equivalent of the *stūpa* housed within Indian *cāitya* halls such as those at Ajanta (Fig. 15).<sup>43</sup> The identification of central pillar as pagoda is based on the fact that many central pillars, for example those in Yungang Caves 2 and 51 (Figs. 16 and 17), were modeled on pagoda architecture, particularly in the representation of multiple roofs and bracketing systems. An example of a similar type of structure can be found in the pagoda in the Tiger *jātaka* painting in Cave 254 (Fig. 11).

As noted by Soper, however, the Yungang central pillars have no counterpart at the Mogao site, where central pillars such as the one in Cave 254 eschew direct references to the architectural features of pagodas.<sup>44</sup> The only architectural motifs on the Cave 254 pillar, the Han-style gate in the two upper side image niches (left side, Fig. 5), are not to be seen in representations of fifth-century pagodas (Fig. 11). Rather, the Han-style

gate niche is exclusively utilized with the seated, cross-ankled bodhisattva images in Cave 254, two on the side walls as well as the two on the central pillar (Fig. 18). I suggest that the simple, cube-like form of the Cave 254 central pillar is an indication that the structure is meant to represent the central shaft of the pagoda rather than the pagoda itself. While no Chinese pagodas are extant from the fifth century, at least some pagodas from a later period were constructed with a circumambulatory path around a quadrangular central shaft with images, for example the Sui dynasty pagoda of Shentongsi, dated to 611 (Fig. 19).<sup>45</sup> Incomplete remains from the Central Asian sites of Endere in the region of Khotan and Gaochang outside Turpan suggest that similar types of pillars were constructed in Central Asia (Figs. 20 and 21).<sup>46</sup> The combination of the plain central shaft with image niches on the four faces of the pillar is a characteristic shared in both Cave 254 and these later Chinese and Central Asian examples.

### *Visualization and Cave 254*

If the central pillar in Cave 254 represents the central shaft of a *stūpa* or pagoda, the interior of the cave is the interior space of a *stūpa* or pagoda. This is a key issue in terms of the rituals that may have been conducted within Cave 254 because there are texts, for example the *Guan fo san mei hai jing*<sup>47</sup> or *Sūtra on the Sea of the Samādhi of Buddha Visualization* (hereafter the *Sea sūtra*), that outline rituals to be performed inside a *stūpa* utilizing Buddha images.

The *Sea sūtra* is one of a group of texts that advocate the practice of *guan* (“to view” or “to contemplate”). *Guan* is a multivalent term that is often associated with the broader term *chan*, or meditation. In these texts, however, *guan* refers specifically to “a class of visualization exercises in which the practitioner mentally constructs an eidetic image of some specific object or scene.”<sup>48</sup> Soper describes the practice of *guan* as “a special kind of mystical adventure” in which one attempts “a systematic building-up of visual images, each as complete and precise as possible, in a sequence from the simple toward the complex.”<sup>49</sup>

In addition to the *Sea sūtra*, five extant texts make up the *guan* group.<sup>50</sup> These are:

(1) the *Guan mi le pu sa shang sheng dou shuai tian jing* or *Sūtra on Visualizing Maitreya Bodhisattva's Rebirth Above in Tusita Heaven* (hereafter *Maitreya Visualization sūtra*);<sup>51</sup>

(2) the *Guan wu liang shou fo jing* or *Sūtra on Visualizing Amitāyus Buddha*;<sup>52</sup>

(3) the *Guan yao wang yao shang er pu sa jing* or *Sūtra*

on *Visualizing the Two Bodhisattvas Bhaisajyārāja and Bhaisajyasamudgata*,<sup>53</sup>

(4) the *Guan xu kong zang pu sa jing* or *Sūtra on Visualizing the Bodhisattva Akāśagarbha*,<sup>54</sup>

(5) the *Guan pu xian pu sa xing fa jing* or *Sūtra on the Practice of Visualizing the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra*.<sup>55</sup>

There is no evidence that any of these works were of Indian origin, leaving open the possibility that they were composed in either Central Asia or China itself. The attribution of all of the texts to Central Asian translators suggests a Central Asian origin.<sup>56</sup> Other scholars, citing internal textual evidence, have argued for the Chinese authorship of the works.<sup>57</sup> In any case, these works were all available in Chinese between 398 and 455.<sup>58</sup>

It should be noted that this group of visualization texts has a close relationship to Liangzhou Buddhism in that two of the translators, Dharmamitra and Juqu Jingsheng, are known to have been active under the Northern Liang dynasty. Juqu Jingsheng obtained the *Maitreya Visualization sūtra* at Gaochang, to the northwest of Dunhuang, an indication of the popularity of visualization practices in this region. Dharmamitra established a monastery at Dunhuang before moving on to the Northern Liang capital and then to southern China. It is probable that Dharmamitra shared his interest in visualization practices with the Buddhists of Dunhuang at that time. Furthermore, Buddhahadra, the translator of the *Sea sūtra*, traveled from Kashmir to China at the invitation of and accompanied by a Liangzhou monk, Zhiyan. Although there is no direct evidence, it is likely Buddhahadra and Zhiyan traveled through northwest China before they arrived in Chang'an in 408.<sup>59</sup> In addition, four of the six *guan sūtras* are represented in the Stein collection of Dunhuang manuscripts.<sup>60</sup> From such circumstantial evidence, it seems probable that the type of visualization practices advocated in this group of texts was known at the Mogao site in the latter part of the fifth century.<sup>61</sup> The two visualization texts most relevant to the imagery in Cave 254, one directed towards Śākyāmuni and the other focused on Maitreya and Tusita Heaven, will be discussed below.

### Śākyāmuni Visualization

The text that most completely describes visualization practices in a *stūpa* is the *Sea sūtra*. This work focuses on the visualization of Śākyāmuni and contains a specific reference to “entering a Buddha *stūpa*.”<sup>62</sup> The phrase could no doubt refer to entering a pagoda as well as a *stūpa*-cave such as Cave 254.<sup>63</sup>

The *Sea sūtra* begins with a straightforward question:

after the Nirvāṇa of Śākyāmuni, how can the body and radiance of the Buddha be seen? Śākyāmuni answers by stating that those who wish to see the specific attributes of the Buddha’s body as well as incidents from his life “must be taught step by step this [process of] fixing their thoughts, in accordance with their powers of mental seeing.”<sup>64</sup> This section is followed by specific directions on how disciples might visualize the Buddha: “first, to recite the most profound sūtra canon, [written on] *tala* leaves; second, to keep the commandments in all purity, and maintain an unsullied deportment; and third, to fix thoughts and reflect with an untroubled mind.”<sup>65</sup> The practice of “fixing thoughts” in order to visualize the Buddha is then described. The practice entails building up an image of the Buddha by focusing on specific parts of the body, starting either from the top of the head or the soles of his feet, and gradually including each important attribute of the Buddha’s body.

First, however, the *Sea sūtra* prescribes an elaborate set of rituals as a prerequisite for the visualization of the Buddha:

any monk or nun or lay devotee of either sex, or god or Naga or other member of the Eight Classes—any being whatsoever who is desirous of visualizing a Buddha image, will first go into a Buddha *stūpa* with a good, fragrant plaster and various earths, and plaster over the floor until it is clean. Then to the extent of his ability he will burn incense and scatter flowers in adoration of the Buddha image. He will tell of his past crimes and adore the Buddha in penitence. After he has humbled his heart in this way for the space of one week he will again go among the crowds to plaster over and sweep out the priests’ floors, getting rid of every kind of filth. He will do penitence before a priest and adore the brothers’ feet. Having passed another week in worshipping this way with an unflagging heart, he should if he has taken orders recite the monastic rules, to whet the edge of his intelligence to the highest degree; while if he is a householder he will cherish his parents and show a loving reverence to his master and his elders. Thus he will discipline his heart and make it submissive.<sup>66</sup>

Only after this stage of humility is achieved can the devotee begin the visualization process, first by prostrating himself weeping before an image of Śākyāmuni, then taking a seated position and fixing his thoughts on a single point of the image, for example the toe. The text instructs the practitioner to “sit with closed mouth, closed eyes, and folded hands, in a fixed position.”<sup>67</sup> After carefully visualizing the toe of the image for a week, the practitioner will be able to see the toe of a golden image with eyes opened or closed. It should be noted that there are remains of gold leaf on the face of the main icon of Cave 254, an indication that the body of the sculpture was golden in accordance with the description in the *Sea sūtra*. From this point the devotee moves on to the two feet and on up



the body to the hair. Then the face will be revealed, with the brow and eyes “like a painting done by some master-artist among the gods.”<sup>68</sup> The visualization process is completed when one sees the rays coming from the top of the head.

The entire process is then repeated fourteen times, after which the practitioner will be able to see the image whether in or out of *sanmei* or *samādhi*.<sup>69</sup> Finally, the images are multiplied: “When he can see a single figure perfectly he will go on to imagine two images ... and then three ... and then ten ... and then a whole chamber completely filled with Buddha images, so that no space remains between them.”<sup>70</sup> With further practice and penitence the practitioner will be able systematically to expand the field of his visualization until he can fill the Ten Quarters of Space and pure golden images emitting a great light. Ultimately, the successful practitioner will meet and receive teachings directly from the Thousand Buddhas of this Bhadrakalpa and the Thousand Buddhas of the future.<sup>71</sup>

The *Sea sūtra* goes on to describe the practices that should be followed if one is unsuccessful in visualizing some attribute of the Buddha. For example, if a monk has committed an offense and is therefore unable to visualize the rays from the *ūmā*, he is advised to “enter a stūpa and observe the statue’s *ūmā* for from one to three days, clasping his hands and weeping while he studies with all his heart. Then he may go before the brothers and tell of his previous offense.”<sup>72</sup> In another section, the *sūtra* states that “anyone who fails to see should enter a stūpa and visualize all the seated figures.”<sup>73</sup> After visualizing these seated figures, presumably Buddhas, the practitioner will be able to expiate his sins through penitence.

The intense concern with karmic action is clear throughout the *Sea sūtra*. On one hand, the effect of past misdeeds is, as we saw in the paragraph above, the primary cause of failure in visualizing all of Śakyāmini’s attributes. On the other, there are repeated promises of the remission of sins through visualization practices. For example, the *Sea sūtra* states that “One meditates on the rays from the white tuft between the Buddha’s eyebrows, from one to seven days, upon which the above-mentioned four types of sins will be lightened. After three weeks of this one’s sins will gradually disappear; after seven weeks one will be wholly purified.”<sup>74</sup> For those who are able to reach the highest levels of visualization practice, the *Sea sūtra* promises the absolution of “sins accumulated during sixty millions of kalpas of reincarnation.”<sup>75</sup>

Using the *Sea sūtra* as an example, we can make some general observations about visualization practice. It should be understood that the goal is to see the Buddha in solid form. The *Sea sūtra* states that

“following the visualization, [the object] appears” and “to obtain this visualization, is called the samādhi-of-the-appearance-[of the Buddhas]-in-front-[of the mental eyes].”<sup>76</sup> In such a process the utilization of visual images of a Buddha seems particularly appropriate to the aim of literally producing a Buddha in front of one’s eyes.

The *Sea sūtra* also places emphasis on certain preparatory rituals for visualization practice. One is *pūjā*, or devotional rites towards the Buddha image such as burning incense, scattering flowers, and prostration. Another is confession of past wrongdoings and penitence, a purification of oneself that is echoed in the physical activity of plastering and cleaning the stūpa or the monk’s quarters. Wrongdoings from one’s past are the greatest hindrance to successful visualization, which is why confession and penitence play such a central role in visualization practice. For example, the *Sea sūtra* mentions that past wrongdoings will prevent one from visualizing the true golden hue of the Buddhas, but through penitence the practitioner will eventually be able to see their actual golden color.<sup>77</sup>

One example of how Śakyāmini visualization functioned within the overall context of Liangzhou Buddhism is recorded in the *Gao seng zhuan* biography of Dharmakṣema. When a monk from Zhangye, Daojin, asked to be given the *śīlā* (precepts) of a bodhisattva, Dharmakṣema ordered him first to confess all of his shortcomings. After seven days and nights of earnest confession, Daojin once again approached Dharmakṣema but was rebuffed by his master. Realizing that he still retained serious karmic obstacles to receiving the precepts, Daojin dedicated himself to meditation and confession for three years. One day while in *samādhi*, Daojin visualized Śakyāmini giving him the precepts, an experience shared by more than ten other monks whom Daojin lived with. When Daojin met Dharmakṣema, his master, already aware of Daojin’s experience, congratulated him on receiving the precepts. Later, Daojin lectured on the precepts in front of a statue of the Buddha.<sup>78</sup>

From the above, it is clear that visualization practice should be understood in terms of its place within a larger set of Buddhist practices and beliefs. The practice of visualization involves much more than the development of certain eidetic skills; it entails an elaborate set of rituals in a specific setting utilizing actual images.<sup>79</sup> It is important to note, moreover, that the *Sea sūtra* refers to not only the use of images but the setting of the images in a “chamber,” such as Cave 254, specifically employed for visualization practices.

Cave 254 was well suited for the rituals described in the *Sea sūtra*. The main icon of the cave, the large seated Śakyāmini in the front face of the central pillar,

was an ideal focus for both rituals of *pūjā* and visualization practices. *Pūjā* activities such as the scattering of flowers and obeisance to the Buddha image could be accommodated in the large open area directly in front of the main image. The rows of serial Buddhas on all four walls are related to the advanced stage of visualization in which the practitioner is able to visualize a chamber filled with Buddha images (Fig. 22). As we will see below, these were not the only practices pursued in Cave 254.

### *Maitreya Visualization*

A second visualization text that describes rituals involving *stūpas* and images is the *Maitreya Visualization sūtra*. The goal of the practices outlined in this text is to be reborn in the presence of Maitreya bodhisattva in Tusita Heaven and eventually to accompany Maitreya back to earth when he takes up his reign as the next Buddha. Two methods of achieving rebirth in Tusita Heaven are described in the *sūtra*. One is to do good works, clean the floors of *stūpas*, make offerings, read and chant the scriptures, concentrate on an image of the Buddha, and call on Maitreya's name at death. The other is to set up an image, make offerings, and meditate on Tusita.<sup>80</sup>

Some of these practices are similar to those described in the *Sea sūtra*, for example the cleaning of *stūpas*, the offerings involving an image, and the essential role of images in meditative practices. Noticeably absent in the *Maitreya Visualization sūtra* are practices of confession and repentance; the goal of absolving past sins, however, is as important as it is in the *Sea sūtra*. In the Maitreya text Śakyāmini instructs the practitioner as follows:

After My Nirvāṇa any member of the four categories of believers, or god, or Nāga, or demon, who is desirous of being reborn in the Tusita Heaven, must carry out this meditation, fixing his thoughts and reflecting. He must think of the Tusita Heaven and keep the Buddha's commandments for from one to seven days, bearing in mind the ten virtuous actions and the ten good paths, and with this merit turn his prayers toward rebirth in the presence of Maitreya. He must carry out this meditation; and he who does so, if he sees but a single godling, or a single lotus blossom, or calls on Maitreya's name for the duration of but a single thought, that man will cancel out the sins accumulated during 1200 kalpas of reincarnation. Merely by hearing Maitreya's name and paying reverence to it with clasped hands, he will cancel out the sins of fifty kalpas.<sup>81</sup>

Successful rebirth in Tusita Heaven is even more efficacious: "the sins of countless ages are obliterated by the mere sight of the rays that stream from His [Maitreya's] *ūmā*."<sup>82</sup> Again, the crucial role of merit

and karmic action in these practices is self-evident.

Soper noted that visualization was not emphasized in this text: "no technique of visualization is offered; the goal of mystical seeing is described in a routine way."<sup>83</sup> At the same time, Sponberg's study of the later commentary on the *Maitreya Visualization sūtra* by the Korean monk Wŏnhyo suggests that the actual practice based on the *Maitreya Visualization sūtra* may have been more closely related to that of the other visualization texts than is apparent in the *sūtra* text itself.<sup>84</sup> Wŏnhyo, for example, not only explains in detail visualization practices based on the *Maitreya Visualization sūtra*, he explicitly associates these practices with those taught in other visualization texts such as the *Sea sūtra*.<sup>85</sup> There is a major difference between the *Sea* and *Maitreya Visualization sūtras*, however, in terms of what is to be visualized. While the goal of the *Sea sūtra* is seeing Śakyāmini and eventually multiple Buddhas, the focus of the *Maitreya Visualization sūtra* is not Maitreya but the visualization of the practitioner "amidst all the splendors of Tusita Heaven, splendors that certainly include, but are not limited to, Maitreya."<sup>86</sup> The goal is to "place oneself in the presence of Maitreya and his heaven."<sup>87</sup>

The upper portions of Cave 254 contain imagery that accords well with the above emphasis on visualizing one's rebirth in Tusita Heaven (Fig. 22). The motif of circular open blossoms, representing the lotus flowers on which a believer is to be reborn, is repeated in the vertical panels of the gable ceiling, in the corners of the lantern ceiling pattern, and inside the niches housing the Maitreya bodhisattvas just below the apex of the gable roof on the north and south walls (Figs. 2 and 22). Flying celestials in some of the lantern ceiling patterns and the band of celestial musicians in the uppermost register of all four walls further accent the heavenly ambience of the uppermost portions of the cave. The placement of no less than four separate images of Maitreya bodhisattva in the upper part of the cave clearly identifies the heavenly realm represented as Tusita Heaven, the present abode of the future Buddha Maitreya (Fig. 18). As is the case in the *Maitreya Visualization sūtra*, the emphasis in Cave 254 is on the representation of Tusita Heaven as a whole rather than Maitreya himself.

It should be understood that rebirth in Tusita Heaven was seen as a tangible and attainable goal. In the Buddhist cosmological system, Tusita Heaven is one of six heavens in the *kāmadhātu*, or "realm of desire," in which our own world is situated. This means that Tusita Heaven is close at hand and accessible, unlike the pure lands such as Sukhāvatī that are located in completely different world systems. The comparatively modest goal of rebirth in Tusita Heaven also has



important implications for the level of difficulty in the visualization practices taught. Namely, the techniques associated with the visualization of Maitreya bodhisattva did not need to be highly advanced or complex. The practice was accessible to lay Buddhists and common monks.<sup>88</sup>

In contrast, Maitreya, as the next Buddha, was viewed by some clergy, particularly those adept at visualization practices, as an authority who could be queried directly on questions of doctrine or precepts. For example, it was said that the monk Zhiyan, who accompanied Buddhahadra to China, once entered into *samādhi* and traveled to Tusita Heaven to have a question concerning his ordination resolved by Maitreya.<sup>89</sup> This type of meditative practice, clearly beyond the reach of most Maitreya devotees, should be distinguished from the more common practices that simply sought the reward of rebirth in Tusita Heaven.<sup>90</sup> It is possible that the images of Maitreya in Cave 254 were used by clergy who wished to be transported into Maitreya's presence in a state of *samādhi*. But the emphasis of the visual imagery in the cave on rebirth and the resplendence of Tusita Heaven as a whole suggest that the primary goal of practitioners in Cave 254 was rebirth in Tusita Heaven.

As the future Buddha, Maitreya was also highly charged with political connotations in fifth- and sixth-century northern China. This deity had two strikingly opposite political aspects: one as a supporter of the *status quo* and the other as a messianic leader. The use of Maitreya in Cave 254 is clearly related to the orthodox and conservative interpretation of the bodhisattva awaiting Buddhahood in Tusita Heaven rather than the focus of revolutionary cults that projected Maitreya Buddha as an apocalyptic savior.<sup>91</sup> Maitreya as the supporter of the existing political system is especially relevant to the Dunhuang region in that a number of Buddhist inscriptions from the area explicitly identify local secular rulers with Maitreya.<sup>92</sup>

It is important to note that the *Sea* and *Maitreya Visualization sūtras* in the fifth century, as well as the other texts from the visualization group, do not appear to be concerned with promoting one deity over another in a competitive sense. The texts were more involved in the technique and goals of visualization, and the choice of a particular Buddha or bodhisattva to visualize was primarily a factor of functional requirement.<sup>93</sup> In a situation where a devotee was concerned with his or her future rebirth, the natural focus of visualization practice was on Maitreya. Śakyāmuni visualization was most likely associated with his role as the supreme exemplar for monastic practices and lay austerities. The practitioners of visualization in Cave 254 could thus direct their efforts at the cult figure

most appropriate for their life situations.

An example of this catholic spirit can be found in the *Sea sūtra*, which while ostensibly focused on Śakyāmuni, states at one point that the practitioner's "Karma merits through visualizing images will be such that when Maitreya appears in the world, he will see Maitreya Buddha when He first takes His seat, cross-legged, under the Dragon-flower Tree."<sup>94</sup> The *Sea sūtra* also declares that the Thousand Buddhas of this Bhadrakalpa as well as those of the future age will be the teachers of the practitioner. Thus, this single text embraces practices involving the cults of Śakyāmuni, Maitreya, and the Thousand Buddhas, an indication that practitioners of visualization in Cave 254 were not focused on one cult figure or text to the exclusion of others.

### *Names of the Buddhas*

The Thousand Buddha pattern found in Cave 254 is indicative of a Buddhist practice known as *buddhanāma* or *foming*, the hearing, reciting, and retaining of the names of the Buddhas.<sup>95</sup> The number of Buddhas to be invoked varies widely among the *foming sūtras*. According to Tokuno, the most popular were sets of thirty-five, fifty-three, and one thousand. It is not uncommon to find differently numbered sets of Buddhas in one text.

No set or combination of sets of multiple Buddha names appears to correspond exactly with the 1,235 small serial Buddhas painted on the walls of Cave 254 (Fig. 22).<sup>96</sup> Nonetheless, there is evidence of *foming* practices in the cave. For example, one text, the *Guo chu chuangyan jie qian fo ming jing* or *Sūtra on the Names of the Thousand Buddhas of the Past Majestic Kalpa*, promises rebirth in the Buddha lands and eventual Buddhahood to

any worthy man or woman who hears the names of the World-honored Buddhas of the past, present, and future kalpas, who believes in them joyfully and reads and recites them without injurious intent; who may be able to copy them out by hand so that they may be explained to others, or who may be able to have painted Buddha icons fashioned, or may be able to worship them with incense, flowers, and music.<sup>97</sup>

In Cave 254 we find two of the practices mentioned above: the copying of the names of the Buddhas on small colophons adjacent to each of the serial Buddhas and the painting of their images.<sup>98</sup> It seems probable that the other practices, the reading and reciting the names of the Buddhas and the worship of them, were also carried out in the cave.

Some of the *foming sūtras* specify detailed practices

of repentance and *pūjā* to be performed before reciting the Buddha names, a pattern of ritual parallel to that described in the *Sea sūtra*. One text, the *Fo ming jing*,<sup>99</sup> states that the practitioner, whether monk, nun, novice, or lay person, must first repent his or her sins by bathing and purification. Then the devotee should enter a quiet place such as a meditation chamber that is decorated with banners, flowers, paintings, and an image of the Buddha. After burning incense and scattering flowers, the practitioner should contemplate the austerities of the Buddha and the Buddha's resolve to attain enlightenment. A monk must continue this practice for forty-nine days and nights, a novice for twenty-one, and a lay person for seven. Only after completing the required rituals with an act of repentance can the practitioner move on to paying reverence to the Buddhas, reciting their names, and finally worshipping them.<sup>100</sup> The same text enumerates a total of 11,093 Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and pratyekabuddhas to honor.<sup>101</sup>

Manuscripts from the Mogao site provide us with some indication of how various sets of Buddha names were used in conjunction with one another. One such work in the Stein collection contains lists of Buddha names drawn from a number of different *foming sūtras*. These groupings include the thirty regional Buddhas, the thirty-eight Buddhas from the six directions, and the one hundred sixty Buddhas.<sup>102</sup> In addition, the manuscript contains a list of fifty-three Buddhas from one of the previously mentioned visualization texts, the *Sūtra on Visualizing the Two Bodhisattvas Bhaisajyarāja and Bhaisajyasamudgata*. This combination of various Buddha names from both *foming* and visualization *sūtras* illustrates well what I believe was the normative pattern of Buddhist practice in Cave 254. Namely, a devotee was able to participate comfortably in a variety of interrelated rituals focused on different Buddhas or bodhisattvas.

There is additional evidence for the close relationship between *foming* and visualization texts. Besides the set of fifty-three Buddhas included in the Stein manuscript, the *Sūtra on Visualizing the Two Bodhisattvas Bhaisajyarāja and Bhaisajyasamudgata* contains a reference to the Ten Buddhas of the Ten Directions.<sup>103</sup> Another of the visualization texts, the *Sūtra on Visualizing the Bodhisattva Akāśagarbha*, stresses *foming* practices and contains lists of thirty-five Buddhas of the past, fifty-three Buddhas of the past, and Buddhas of the Ten Directions, among other multiple Buddha groupings.<sup>104</sup> The *Sea sūtra* promises the successful practitioner that the "acuteness of his mental powers" will enable him to meet and receive teachings from the Thousand Buddhas of this Bhadrakalpa as well as the Thousand Buddhas of the future age.<sup>105</sup> In addition, the

technique of multiplying the visualized Buddhas, as described in the *Sea sūtra*, would seem to be associated with both *foming* practice and the Thousand Buddha pattern found in Cave 254.

The significant number of early Chinese texts that advocate the practice of *foming* indicates the popularity of the practice in the latter part of the fifth century. Considering the variety of multiple Buddha groups available in the fifth century and the ambiguous number of serial Buddhas in Cave 254, the Thousand Buddha pattern in the cave does not appear to be derived from any single text or to represent one particular set of Buddha names. Rather, as in the case of the visualization *sūtras*, the importance of *foming* for the practitioner lies in the technique and the results, not in the specific numerical set of Buddhas or Buddha names that is utilized. In this sense I believe the Thousand Buddha pattern in Cave 254 refers broadly to the concept of multiple and serial Buddhas in both *foming* and visualization practices.

### *Circumambulation*

*Pradaksinā*, or the circumambulation of a *stūpa*, is a Buddhist practice well attested in the Indian tradition. The presence of a pillar that represents the central shaft of a *stūpa* in Cave 254 immediately suggests this practice, although reference to circumambulation in early Chinese Buddhism is limited. The *Gao seng zhuan* biography of Dunhuang-born Dharmarakṣa states that at the beginning of the fourth century he practiced circumambulation "assiduously."<sup>106</sup> The biography of the Indian monk Sanghavarman states that sometime during the period between 434 and 442 he circumambulated a three-story *stūpa* in southern China and recited texts "day and night without ceasing."<sup>107</sup> Circumambulation practice, however, is conspicuously absent from the visualization and *foming sūtras* discussed above, and it is unclear to what extent this practice was carried out in Cave 254.<sup>108</sup>

One fifth-century text that does give instruction in a ritual of circumambulation is the aforementioned native Chinese *sūtra*, the *Ti wei bo li jing* or the *Sūtra of Trapuśa and Bhallika*. The Buddha gives instruction to Trapuśa in this ritual as follows: "In circumambulating the statue, three acts should be present. In raising your foot, reflect upon the act of raising your foot. In putting down your foot, be mindful of the act of putting down your foot. Thirdly, you should not look left and right or spit within the temple compound."<sup>109</sup> As Lai explains, the practitioners are here given "a simple form of contemplative mindfulness derived from Buddhist meditation."<sup>110</sup> It should be noted that



there is no mention of a *stūpa*. Rather, the object to be circumambulated is a statue within a temple compound. While this description does not rule out the circumambulation of an image such as the one in the front face of the Cave 254 central pillar, it clearly indicates a practice that requires nothing more than a single freestanding image.

In other respects the *Trapuṣa and Bhallika sūtra* has similarities with the visualization and *foming* rituals related to Cave 254. There is the same emphasis on confession and the following of precepts. The image is again central, not only to the circumambulation ritual, but for *pūjā* rituals such as the showering of flowers and the lighting of incense and lamps.<sup>111</sup> Consistent throughout the text, however, is an emphasis on practices considerably less demanding than those in the visualization *sūtras*, an indication of the lay audience addressed by the *Trapuṣa and Bhallika sūtra*. The goals outlined in this text are for the most part equally straightforward and modest. For example, when *Trapuṣa* queries the Buddha as to what benefits would be derived from circumambulation, the Buddha replies:

Circumambulation will produce five rewards: The person will gain a good complexion in his next life; his voice will be fine; he may be reborn in heaven; he may be reborn into families of lords and nobles; he may gain nirvāṇa. What causes the good complexion? It is his rejoicing in seeing the Buddha. What causes the fine voice? It is his reciting the *sūtra* while circumambulating. What causes the rebirth in heaven? It is his will and intentional faithfulness to the precepts while circumambulating. What causes rebirth into aristocratic families? It is his act of honoring the feet of Buddha with bowed head and face. What causes the attainment of nirvāṇa? It is the accumulation of good karma.<sup>112</sup>

The *Trapuṣa and Bhallika sūtra* “elicited great interest among the common people because it prescribed a course of religious discipline for the layman written in simple popular language.”<sup>113</sup> From the passage above, we can surmise that the practice of circumambulation taught in this text was understood by the author as a practice particularly suited for the common lay believer. Again, characteristics of Liangzhou Buddhism such as the utilization of images and the concern with karma are central to the practices advocated for common lay people in in *Trapuṣa and Bhallika sūtra*.

Although the evidence presented above is less than conclusive, I am inclined to believe, based on the presence of the central pillar in Cave 254 and the pathway around it, that circumambulation was practiced in this cave. Furthermore, if the *Trapuṣa and Bhallika sūtra* is any indication, circumambulation was a practice taught to common lay people in the latter

part of the fifth century, which suggests that it was this class of lay Buddhist practitioners who may have been involved in circumambulation in Cave 254.

### Narrative Paintings

There are four narrative subjects in Cave 254: two *jātaka* tales (the Tiger and Śibi), one *avadāna* (of Nanda), and one story from the life of Śākyāmunī (Māra’s Assault) (Figs. 9–12). The *Sea sūtra* suggests that those who wish to know incidents from the life of Śākyāmunī such as the Māra’s Assault should visualize Śākyāmunī himself.<sup>114</sup> The same text also propounds the practice of visualizing incidents from the previous lives of Śākyāmunī such as the two *jātaka* tales depicted in Cave 254, the Tiger and Śibi *jātakas*.<sup>115</sup> These narrative paintings were thus quite possibly a part of the visualization rituals practiced in Cave 254.

Another possible use for the paintings was to illustrate an oral presentation. Such a function may have been related to popular lectures for lay people known as *sujiang*. The origin of these lectures has been traced back to the Six Dynasties period.<sup>116</sup> Whether or not narrative paintings created as early as the late fifth century were related to this practice is impossible to say at this time. In much later Dunhuang caves there is evidence for the use of narrative paintings as illustrations to *bianwen*, or transformation texts.<sup>117</sup>

The large scale of each of the narrative paintings, their placement at eye level in the front section of the cave, and the ample space provided for an audience directly in front of the works all suggest the possibility that the paintings were utilized in conjunction with oral presentations to a group of devotees (Figs. 2 and 22). The form of the paintings themselves is also indicative of this function. In the Tiger *jātaka* (Fig. 11), the composition is circuitous to the extent that even those familiar with the tale would no doubt have some difficulty in arranging the proper sequence of events. The painting omits the conventional depiction of the three princes departing the palace and riding into the woods, as found, for example, in the version in Cave 428 (Fig. 23). Other scenes are strikingly enigmatic. The three large standing figures in the center of the composition should represent the princes at the moment when they came across the starving tiger and her newborn cubs. The gaze of each, however, is directed obliquely across several later scenes of the *jātaka*, none of which includes the tiger or cubs; furthermore, the central figure, presumably Prince Mahāsattva, is dressed in monastic robes, presaging his incarnation as Śākyāmunī. In another passage the body of the Prince, previously devoured by the tiger and cubs according to

the *jātaka*, has been reconstituted by the painter in order to depict his parents mournfully carrying the intact body towards a pagoda for interment (Fig. 24).<sup>118</sup>

The ambiguities in the visual presentation of the Tiger *jātaka* indicate that the painting was not expected to be the primary means by which the narrative was to be conveyed. These could be left to an oral presenter. As a visual adjunct to the narrative, the painting was thus free to emphasize the dramatic and emotional aspects of the tale without consideration for strict narrative logic. The ambiguous elements of the work suggest that the Tiger *jātaka* painting functioned as an illustrative aid to the oral explication of the narrative. It is possible that each of the narrative paintings in Cave 254 may have served a similar function as a visual aid for sermons or other forms of illustrated teachings for lay people.

### *Function of Cave 254*

From the above discussion, it seems improbable that any single text, cult figure, or ritual was the basis for practice in Cave 254. Rather, the cave appears to have functioned as a setting for and an aid to a complex of interrelated activities: visualization, the recitation of the names of the Buddhas, circumambulation, and some type of oral recitation. This is consistent with what we know about Buddhism at the Mogao caves in the latter part of the fifth century, namely that multiple texts, practices, and cult activities thrived simultaneously and that Buddhist practitioners embraced a wide variety of beliefs with little sense that any one necessarily excluded the other.

Two core rituals can be identified for Cave 254. The first is a devotional rite that involves scattering flowers, lighting incense, and paying obeisance in front of a Buddha image. The second is the ritual of confession and penance in front of an image of the Buddha.<sup>119</sup> The main icon in Cave 254, the large Buddha image in

the front face of the central pillar, is the obvious focus for such rituals. The goal of both rites was to eliminate the negative effects of past wrongdoings. This concern with past actions underscores the key role of karma and karmic retribution in the practices associated with Cave 254.

The nature of the core rituals suggests that both clergy and lay people were users of the cave. The level of training and skill no doubt determined the type of activity pursued by any given practitioner. It is probable that monks or nuns resident at the Mogao site were regularly involved in visualization and *foming* practices in Cave 254. Members of the local elite class would have been the only lay devotees with the time to involve themselves in these practices. At the opposite end of the social spectrum, a lay believer of common means might have the opportunity to enter Cave 254 and hear a lecture or practice circumambulation only on a very special occasion. It is also likely that many lay Buddhists from the local community never had access to such caves as Cave 254.

Even this cursory examination of a complete cave temple from the fifth century has yielded evidence not of a religious program centered on one particular Buddhist cult figure or text, but of an eclectic combination of imagery and practice. Cave 254 appears to have been the setting for a number of closely interrelated Buddhist practices that were understood by the various users of the cave as a cohesive complex of belief and ritual. The interplay of the cave's architecture and imagery parallels the intricate relationship among these practices. Cave 254 is evidence of how elements of architecture, painting, and sculpture were incorporated to meet the functional and pragmatic needs of both clergy and lay Buddhists at the Mogao site. In order to explicate a work of art, it is imperative to be informed about the purposes for which the work was created. It is hoped that this discussion will contribute, albeit imperfectly, to a greater understanding of the visual forms found in Mogao Cave 254.



## Notes

This article is based on parts of my Ph.D. dissertation, "Mogao Cave 254: A Case Study in Early Chinese Buddhist Art," University of California, Berkeley, 1989. The most comprehensive publication of the Mogao caves is Tonkō Bunbutsu Kenkyūjo (Dunhuang Institute for Cultural Relics), eds., *Tonkō bakukōkutsu* (Mogao Caves of Dunhuang), 5 v., Tokyo, 1980–82, hereafter cited as *Tonkō bakukōkutsu*. My research on Cave 254 would not have been possible without the assistance of scholars in both China and Japan: Su Bai and Ma Shizhang, Department of Archaeology, Beijing University; Fan Jinshi, Dunhuang Research Institute; Higashiyama Kengō, Seijō University; and Donohashi Akio, Kobe University. Robert Thorp, in "Artistic Evidence for the Cult of Maitreya in the Early Cave-chapels at Tun-huang" (unpublished paper presented at Princeton University, May 1982), anticipated my interest in understanding the early Mogao cave temples from the viewpoint of those who created and used the caves. The publication of my research in *Ars Orientalis* is particularly appropriate because of the guidance and support I received from two members of the Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan: Walter Spink, who was the first to introduce me to field research at Buddhist cave sites, and Martin Powers, whose early and continued interest in my development as an art historian has been invaluable. Special thanks to my dissertation advisor, Joanna Williams, for her critical comments and encouragement in the development of this essay.

1. According to information provided by Ma Shizhang, the cave is between 9.25 and 9.40 meters deep (east to west) and 6.45 to 6.47 meters wide (north to south). The height to the flat ceiling is between 4.15 and 4.23 meters and to the top of the gable ceiling 4.70 meters. The central pillar is 3.00 to 3.10 meters deep and wide. The doorway of the cave faces east.
2. See, for example, Matsubara Saburo, "Notes to the Plates," in *Arts of China*, v. 2, *Buddhist Cave Temples, New Researches*, tr. Alexander C. Soper, Tokyo, 1969, p. 235, pl. 150, hereafter *Arts of China*. Yu-min Lee argues that a cross-ankled Buddha in either *dharmacakra* or *abhaya mudrā* is a Maitreya. See Yu-min Lee, *The Maitreya Cult and Its Art in Early China*, Ann Arbor, 1983, pp. 288–89. The Dunhuang Research Institute identifies the image as a generic Buddha in Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo (Dunhuang Institute for Cultural Relics), eds., *Dunhuang Mogaoku neirong zonglu* (Summary of the contents of the Mogao caves of Dunhuang), Beijing, 1982, p. 89, and as a Maitreya Buddha in Duan Wenjie, Shi Pingting, and Huo Rangliang, "Tuban shuoming" ("Notes to the plates"), in v. 1 of *Dunhuang Mogaoku* (Mogao Caves of Dunhuang), ed. Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo, Beijing, 1982, p. 192.
3. Lee, *Maitreya Cult*, pp. 288–89, reproduced in *Arts of China*, v. 2, pl. 150. In terms of Indian precedents, a Buddha with ankles crossed is rare. Lee has recorded only one in all Gandharan art. See Lee, *Maitreya Cult*, pp. 254–55 and 289.
4. Higashiyama Kengō, "Tonkō bakukōkutsu hokuchō sonzō no zuzōteki kōsatsu" ("An Iconographic Study of Buddhist Images in the Northern Dynasty Mogao Grottoes of Dunhuang"), *Tōyō Gakujitsu Kenkyū*, v. 24, no. 1, 1985, pp. 76–100.
5. Such a configuration was first suggested by Albert Grünwedel. See Alexander Coburn Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China*, Ascona, 1959, p. 219 and n. 78. Cave 80 is the Höllentopfhöhle, which is now dated to the first phase at the site, sometime in the fourth or early fifth century. See Shinkyō Uiguru jichiku bunbutsu kanri inkai (Supervisory Committee for Cultural Relics of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region) and Haijō ken senbutsudō bunbutsu hokanjo (Kizil Grottoes Depository for Cultural Relics), eds., *Kiziru sekkutsu*, 3 v., Tokyo, 1983–85, v. 2, pp. 165 and 174.
6. According to the findings of the German expedition. See the description of the Höllentopfhöhle in Albert Grünwedel, *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan*, Berlin, 1912, pp. 95 and 98 and fig. 215.
7. The images have been discussed in the following works: Matsumoto Eiichi, *Tonkōga no kenkyū*, 2 v., Tokyo, 1937, v. 1, pp. 757–61; J. Leroy Davidson, "A Problem in Skulls," *Parnassus*, v. 11, no. 1, January 1939, pp. 33–35; Mizuno Seiichi and Nagahiro Toshio, *Yün-kang: The Buddhist Cave-Temples of the Fifth Century A.D. in North China*, 16 v., Kyoto, 1951–56, v. 6 (text), p. 133; J. Leroy Davidson, *The Lotus Sutra in Chinese Art*, New Haven, 1954, pp. 45–48; Mizuno Seiichi, *Chūgoku no bukyō bijutsu*, Tokyo, 1968, pp. 256–61; and *Tonkō bakukōkutsu*, v. 5, p. 156.
8. See the notes to pl. 27 and 28 in *Tonkō bakukōkutsu*, v. 1, p. 231–32. The Dunhuang Institute description of Mrgasira is consistent with the entry for Migasira Thera in George Peiris Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pālī Proper Names*, 2 v., London, 1960 reprint, first published 1937, v. 2, p. 625. There is no corresponding entry, however, for the Institute's Vasu.
9. My conclusion corresponds to that of Higashiyama. See "Tonkō bakukōkutsu hokuchō sonzō," p. 95.
10. Under the Northern Wei, Liangzhou corresponded to that part of Gansu Province west of the Yellow River. For various treatments of "Liangzhou Buddhism," see Tsukamoto Zensyū, *Wei Shou, Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism*, tr. Leon Hurvitz, Kyoto, 1956, pp. 57–60, nn. 1 and 2; Alexander C. Soper, "Northern Liang and Northern Wei in Kansu," *Artibus Asiae*, v. 21, no. 2, 1958, pp. 134–44; and Satō Chisui, "The Character of Yün-kang Buddhism," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, v. 36, 1978, pp. 67–73.
11. Paul Demiéville, Hubert Durt and Anna Seidel, comp., *Répertoire du canon bouddhique Sino-Japonais*, Paris, 1978, p. 243. The Northern Liang dynasty controlled Dunhuang from 421 to 441. For a historical account of Dunhuang under the Northern Liang, see Satō Chisui, "Gokujōrokugoku kara nanboku-chō jidai" ("From the Sixteen Barbarian Kingdoms to the Northern and Southern Dynasties Period"), in *Tonkō no rekishi* (History of Dunhuang), v. 2 of Kōza Tonkō, ed. Enoki Kazuo, Tokyo, 1980, pp. 75–86.
12. Tsukamoto, *Treatise on Buddhism*, p. 59, n. 2.
13. Tsukamoto, *Treatise on Buddhism*, p. 61.
14. For example, see Satō, "Character of Yün-kang Buddhism," pp. 67–73, or Whalen W. Lai, "The Earliest Folk Buddhist Religion in China: T'i-wei Po-li Ching and Its Historical Significance," in *Buddhist and Taoist Practice in Medieval Chinese Society*, ed. David W. Chappell, Asian Studies at Hawaii, No. 34, Honolulu, 1987, pp. 13–14.
15. Tanyao was probably a native of Liangzhou. He was known as

- a meditation expert under the reign of the Northern Liang ruler Juqu Mujian (r. 433–39). See Tsukamoto Zenryū, "The Sramana Superintendent T'an Yao and His Time," tr. Galen Eugene Sargent, *Monumenta Serica*, v. 16, 1957, pp. 376–78.
16. Fa-hsien, *A Record of the Buddhist Countries*, tr. Li Yung-hsi, Peking, 1957, p. 16.
  17. Michel Strickmann, "India in the Chinese Looking-Glass," in *The Silk Route and the Diamond Path*, ed. Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter, Los Angeles, 1982, p. 53.
  18. Robert Shih, tr., *Biographies des moines éminents (Kao seng ichouan) de Houei-kiao*, Louvain, 1968, p. 99. This work is a translation of the first section of an early sixth-century biography of Buddhist monks, the *Gao seng zhuan* by Huijiao, hereafter *GSZ*.
  19. Text number 1339, translated by Fazhong, in Takakusu Junjirō, Watanabe Kaigyoku and Ono Gemmyo, comp., *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō (Buddhist Canon newly compiled in the Taishō era)*, 100 v., Tokyo, 1924–35, hereafter *T*. One of the Stein manuscripts, S. 1524 (G. 3873), is dated to 521. Of the remaining four, Lionel Giles places two in the fifth century and two in the sixth. See Lionel Giles, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Chinese Manuscripts from Tunhuang in the British Museum*, London, 1957, p. 109. S. and G. refer to manuscript catalogue numbers according to Stein and Giles respectively.
  20. S. 4494 (G. 6248). See Giles, *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 196.
  21. *T* 2059.50.336b, as translated in Shih, *Biographies*, p. 101.
  22. Tsukamoto, *Treatise on Buddhism*, p. 77.
  23. S. 1329 (G. 1774), translated in Giles, *Descriptive Catalogue*, pp. 47–48.
  24. The text, usually dated to ca. 460, is classified as apocryphal, in other words a native Chinese *sūtra* rather than a translated text, in the Chinese Buddhist Canon. See James Caswell, *Cloud Hill and the Glory of the Law*, Ann Arbor, 1970, pp. 105–9 and Tsukamoto, *Treatise on Buddhism*, pp. 34–35. The work is known through fragments published by Tsukamoto and a Dunhuang manuscript, S. 2051 (G. 5431); see Giles, *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 162. Another Dunhuang manuscript in the Pelliot collection may also contain a portion of this text. For all three sources, see Lai, "Earliest Folk Buddhist Religion," pp. 11–12. A complete translation of the work into English will be forthcoming in Kyoko Tokuno, "Buddhist Apocrypha and Indigenous Religion in China: A Study of the T'i-wei Polijing," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley.
  25. Lai, "Earliest Folk Buddhist Religion," pp. 13–14. A direct relationship between the *sūtra* and the Sangha and Buddha households, however, is not by any means established.
  26. *T* 2060.50.428a, as translated in Lai, "Earliest Folk Buddhist Religion," pp. 13–14.
  27. See the three tales from the *Mingxiangji* translated in Donald E. Gjerston, *Ghosts, Gods, and Retribution: Nine Buddhist Miracle Tales from Six Dynasties and Early T'ang China*, Asian Studies Committee, Occasional Papers Series No. 2, Amherst, 1978, pp. 6–15.
  28. Shih, *Biographies*, pp. 140–41.
  29. Tsukamoto, *Treatise on Buddhism*, p. 57, n. 1.
  30. For example, *T* 277 and *T* 409, both of which will be discussed below in relation to the visualization practices performed in Cave 254.
  31. Tsukamoto, *Treatise on Buddhism*, p. 57, n. 1.
  32. The text from Khotan is *T* 620, the *Zhi chan bing bi yao fa*. See Shih, *Biographies*, p. 105. The Maitreya visualization text is *T* 452, the *Guan mi le pu sa shang sheng dou shuai tian jing*. For a complete list of his translations, see Lewis R. Lancaster, *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue*, Berkeley, 1979, p. 609.
  33. Soper, "Northern Liang," p. 143.
  34. Paul Demiéville, "La Yogācārabhūmi de Sangharaksa," *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient*, v. 44, no. 2, 1954, pp. 378–79 and n. 2.
  35. *GSZ*, *T*.2059.50.399b.
  36. Shushō, comp., *Meisōdeshō*, reprint from *Dai Nihon zoku zōkyū*, Taibei, 1975, p. 13, as translated in Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 54. The *Ming seng zhuan* was a collection of monks' biographies compiled by Bao Chang in the early sixth century. Only a few fragmentary passages copied by the Japanese monk Shushō in 1235 survive from this text.
  37. Soper, "Northern Liang," p. 142.
  38. Soper, "Northern Liang," p. 141.
  39. Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 112. Huida was also known by the name Liu Sahe. For additional background on Huida, see Hélène Vetch, "Liu Sahe: traditions et iconographie," in *Les peintures murales et les manuscrits de Dunhuang*, ed. Michel Soyumié, Paris, 1984, pp. 61–78.
  40. Soper, *Literary Evidence*, pp. 112–13.
  41. The Chinese character *ta* is used in Buddhist texts to represent both the *stūpa* and pagoda, thereby underscoring the essential equivalency of the Indian and Chinese terms. The English translation of *ta* followed in this article will be *stūpa*, with the understanding that a pagoda is a Chinese architectural form of the *stūpa*.
  42. For a discussion of the transformation of the *stūpa* form into the pagoda, see Dietrich Seckel, *The Art of Buddhism*, New York, 1963, pp. 103–20.
  43. For example, see Xiao Mo, "Tonkō Bakukōkutsu no sekkutsu keishiki" ("The structural form of the Dunhuang Mogao caves"), in *Tonkō bakukōkutsu*, v. 2, pp. 208–13, or Akiyama Terukazu, "The Tun-huang Caves and Their Wall Painting," in *Arts of China*, v. 2, p. 11. For a discussion of painted representations of pagodas in the early Mogao caves, see Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiu Kaoguzu, "Dunhuang Mogaoqu beichao bi-huazhong de jianzhu" ("Architecture in the northern dynasties wall-paintings of the Dunhuang Mogao caves"), *Kaogu*, v. 143, no. 2, 1976, pp. 113–15.



44. Soper, "Northern Liang," pp. 158–59.
45. See Liu Dunzhen, ed., *Zhongguo gudai jianzhu shi*, 2nd ed., Beijing, 1980, p. 144.
46. For the central shaft from Endere, see Aurel Stein, *Ancient Khotan*, Oxford, 1907, pp. 422–24.
47. T 643, said to be a translation by Buddhahadbra during the period from 420 to 423 under the Liu Song dynasty. Soper translates the title as the "Sūtra on the Sea of Mystic Ecstasy Attained by Visualizing the Buddha." See Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 184. I have adopted Alan Sponberg's English title as used in his article "Wōnhyo on Maitreya Visualization," in *Maitreya, the Future Buddha*, ed. Alan Sponberg and Helen Hardacre, Cambridge, 1988, p. 99.
48. Alan Sponberg, "Meditation in Fa-hsiang Buddhism," in *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, ed. Peter N. Gregory, Honolulu, 1986, p. 22. Also see pp. 15–21 for a concise discussion of the terminology for Buddhist meditation.
49. Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 144.
50. The distinctive character of the *guan sūtras* and the practices that they describe were identified by Soper in *Literary Evidence*, p. 144. In addition, the texts in the group often refer specifically to one another. See Julian F. Pas, "The Kuan-wu-liang-shou Fo-ching: Its Origin and Literary Criticism," in *Buddhist Thought and Civilization*, ed. Leslie S. Kawamura and Keith Scott, Emeryville, 1977, pp. 197–204.
51. T 452, said to be translated by the Prince of Anyang, Juqu Jingsheng, a member of the Northern Liang ruling house, in 455 under the Liu Song dynasty. The original text was obtained by Juqu Jingsheng at Gaochang sometime before the Northern Liang was defeated by the Northern Wei in 439. See the information on Juqu Jingsheng provided in the GSZ biography of Dharmakṣema as translated in Shih, *Biographies*, pp. 105–6.
52. T 365, translated by Kālayaśas between 424 and 442 under the Liu Song dynasty.
53. T 1161, also translated by Kālayaśas between 424 and 442 under the Liu Song dynasty.
54. T 409, translated by Dharmamitra between 424 and 442 under the Liu Song dynasty.
55. T 277, also translated by Dharmamitra between 424 and 442 under the Liu Song dynasty.
56. In addition, all, with the exception of Kālayaśas, had connections with Kashmir. See Pas, "Kuan-wu-liang-shou Fo-ching," pp. 194–97.
57. See Tsukinowa Kenryū, *Butten no hihan-teki kenkyū*, Kyoto, 1971, pp. 43–173.
58. The original group of *guan* texts was no doubt larger. For example, at least one other lost *guan sūtra*, the *Guan shi yin guan jing*, is recorded in early Buddhist catalogues. Interestingly, this text is said to have been a translation by the same Prince of Anyang, Juqu Jingsheng, who translated the *Maitreya Visualization sūtra*. See Pas, "Kuan-wu-liang-shou Fo-ching," p. 216, n. 33.
59. In the GSZ there is a major discrepancy over how Buddhahadbra arrived in China. His biography states that he not only journeyed through central Asia, but he arrived in China by sea, a highly unlikely combination. See T 2059.50.334c–335a, translated in Shih, *Biographies*, p. 92. Only the overland trip through central Asia is recorded in the biography of Zhiyan, T 2059.50.339b, translated in Shih, *Biographies*, pp. 120–21. Therefore, I am inclined to accept his trip to China and arrival in Changan as having been via the overland route through Hexi. In terms of the date of his arrival in Changan, I follow Demiéville *et al*, *Répertoire du canon bouddhique*, p. 238.
60. These texts are: the *Sea sūtra*, G. 3886–91, including one manuscript of the sixth century, the *Maitreya Visualization sūtra*, G. 3767–3769, the *Bhaisajyārāja* and *Bhaisajyasamudgata Visualization sūtra*, G. 6411 of the sixth century, and the *Amṛtāyus Visualization sūtra*, G. 3698–3719.
61. The importance of meditation practices to Buddhist caves was outlined by Liu Huida, "Beiwei shiku yu chan" ("Northern Wei grottoes and meditation"), *Kaogu Xuebao*, v. 50, no. 3, 1978, pp. 338–39. For a parallel argument directly related to early Mogao caves including Cave 254, see He Shizhe, "Dunhuang Mogao ku beichao yu changuan" ("Dunhuang Mogao grottoes of the Northern Dynasties and meditation/visualization"), *Dunhuangxue Jikan*, v. 1, 1980, pp. 41–52. It should be noted that Liu and He conflate various *sūtras* associated with *guan*, *chan*, or *sanmei* under the rubric of meditation or meditation/visualization.
62. T 643.15.690a. He Shizhe was the first to identify this passage with Mogao central-pillar caves such as 254. See "Dunhuang Mogao ku beichao yu changuan," p. 44.
63. For one record of entering a pagoda from the fourth century, see entry number six in Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 13.
64. T 643.15.648a, as translated in Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 187. The discussion of this text is based on the passages translated by Soper. A complete translation of the chapter on contemplating images, T 643.15.690–692, can be found in E. Benveniste and Paul Demiéville, "Notes sur le Fragment Sogdien du Buddhadyanasamadhisagarasūtra," *Journal Asiatique*, v. 223, Juillet-Septembre 1933, pp. 195–213.
65. T 643.15.647c, as translated in Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 187.
66. T 643.15.690c, as translated in Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 189.
67. T 643.15.690c, as translated in Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 190.
68. T 643.15.690a, as translated in Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 190.
69. In general, a trance state. For a discussion of the *saṃādhi* experience, see Lewis R. Lancaster, "Names in Buddhist Texts," in *Malalasekera Commemoration Volume*, ed. O. H. de A. Wijesekera, Colombo, 1976, pp. 196–202.
70. T 643.15.691a, as translated in Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 190.
71. T 643.15.691b, as translated in Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 190.

72. T643.15.655b, as translated in Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 189.
73. T643.15.681c, as translated in Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 191.
74. T643.15.655b, as translated in Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 189.
75. T643.15.691b, as translated in Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 190.
76. T643.15.691c and 692c, as translated in Julian F. Pas, "Shantao's Interpretation of the Meditative Vision of Buddha Amitāyus," *History of Religions*, v. 14, no. 1, August 1974, p. 103.
77. Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 190.
78. T2059.50.336c, as translated in Shih, *Biographies*, p. 104.
79. At least six passages describe the use of images in overcoming difficulties in the visualization process. See Soper, *Literary Evidence*, pp. 188–89.
80. Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 215.
81. T643.15.420b, as translated in Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 216.
82. Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 215.
83. Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 216.
84. Sponberg, "Maitreya Visualization," pp. 106–7. The use of a mid-seventh-century commentary written in Korea in order to reconstruct Maitreya practices in late fifth-century Dunhuang raises obvious methodological questions. At the same time, the commentary allows valuable insights on actual Maitreya cult practice as opposed to rituals described in the *Maitreya Visualization* text itself. In terms of the focus of this article, it is difficult to ignore the possible relevancy of practices described in Wŏnhyo's commentary despite the temporal and geographical span separating the commentary and Cave 254.
85. Sponberg, "Maitreya Visualization," pp. 99, 106–7.
86. Sponberg, "Maitreya Visualization," p. 101.
87. Sponberg, "Maitreya Visualization," p. 101.
88. Sponberg, "Maitreya Visualization," pp. 101–2.
89. Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 218.
90. For a thorough discussion of the various goals incorporated into the Maitreya cult, see Jan Nattier, "The Meanings of the Maitreya Myth," in *Maitreya, the Future Buddha*, ed. Alan Sponberg and Helen Hardacre, Cambridge, 1988, pp. 23–47.
91. For background on Maitreya as a messianic figure, see Erik Zürcher, "Eschatology and Messianism in Early Chinese Buddhism," in *Leyden Studies in Sinology*, ed. W. L. Idema, Leiden, 1981, pp. 34–56, and "Prince Moonlight: Messianism and Eschatology in Early Medieval Chinese Buddhism," *T'oung Pao*, v. 68, 1982, pp. 1–75.
92. See, for example, the inscriptions discussed by Satō, "Character of Yün-kang Buddhism," pp. 68–69.
93. Sponberg, "Maitreya Visualization," p. 107.
94. T643.15.681c, as translated in Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 191.
95. Background on these practices is based on an unpublished paper by Kyoko Tokuno, "A Study of the *Fo-ming ching* (Buddhanāmasūtra)." Tokuno lists a total of twenty-one *foming sūtras* dated to the first part of the sixth century or earlier.
96. For the Thousand Buddha motif in Cave 254, see Ning Qiang and Hu Tongqing, "Dunhuang Mogaoku di 254 ku qianfohua yanjiu" ("Research on the thousand Buddhas painting of Dunhuang Mogao Cave 254"), *Dunhuang Yanjiu*, v. 9, 1986, pp. 22–36.
97. T446.14.365a, as translated in Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 202.
98. Ning and Hu, "Di 254 ku qianfohua yanjiu," p. 29.
99. T440, translated by Bodhiruci between 520 and 524 under the Northern Wei.
100. The description of this practice is paraphrased from the translation of a portion of the *Foming jing*, T440.14.158c–159a, in Tokuno, "Study of the *Fo-ming ching*," pp. 14–15.
101. See text number 404 in Bunyiu Nanjio, *A Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripitaka*, Oxford, 1883, p. 99.
102. The manuscript, dated by Giles to the sixth century, is S. 2180 (G. 6411). See Giles, *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 201. The thirty regional Buddhas are from T325, the *Jue ding pi ni jing*, translated by Dharmarakṣa between 266 and 313 under the Western Jin. The thirty-eight Buddhas from the six directions are from a text that is not listed in the *Taishō* or Korean versions of the Chinese Buddhist Canon. The one hundred sixty Buddhas are found in T434, the *Cheng yang zhu fo guang de jing*, translation attributed to Kekaya in 472 under the Northern Wei.
103. Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 204.
104. Pas, "Kuan-wu-liang-shou Fo-ching," pp. 200–1.
105. T643.15.691b, as translated in Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 190.
106. T2059.50.326c, as translated in Shih, *Biographies*, p. 35.
107. T2059.50.342b, as translated in Shih, *Biographies*, p. 138.
108. Ning and Hu argue that the practice is related to the Thousand Buddha motif. See "Di 254 ku qianfohua yanjiu," pp. 28–30. But the Buddhist texts cited in their article as evidence of circumambulation practices are not contemporary with Cave 254, all being translations of the Tang dynasty or later.
109. Translated in Lai, "Earliest Folk Buddhist Religion," p. 26.
110. Lai, "Earliest Folk Buddhist Religion," p. 26.
111. Lai, "Earliest Folk Buddhist Religion," pp. 26–27.
112. Lai, "Earliest Folk Buddhist Religion," p. 26.
113. Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, Princeton, 1964, p. 181.
114. T643.15.647c, as translated in Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 187.

115. Liu, "Shiku yu chan," p. 343, and He, "Mogaoku beichao yu changuan," pp. 45–47.
116. Victor H. Mair, *Tun-huang Popular Narratives*, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 6–7.
117. For an overview, see Akiyama Terukazu, "Tonkō ni okeru henbun to kaiga" ("Bianwen and painting at Dunhuang"), *Bijutsu Kenkyū*, v. 211, 1960, pp. 47–74. Also, see Bai Hua-wen, "What is Pien-wen?" tr. Victor H. Mair, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, v. 44, no. 2, 1984, pp. 505–7.
118. This reading of the work follows that of Shi Pingliang and Ning Qiang, "Tuban shuoming (Notes to the Plates)," in *Dunhuang Bihua*, *Zhongguo Meishu Quanji*, v. 14, ed. Dunhuang Yanjiusuo, Shanghai, 1985, p. 6.
119. The reader may recall that neither confession nor penance was mentioned in the *Maitreya Visualization sūtra*. Wōnhyo, however, does specifically refer to such practices in his commentary on the text. See Sponberg, "Maitreya Visualization," pp. 98–100. Considering the consistent emphasis on confession and penance in the other visualization texts, it seems probable that in actual practice confession and penance were among the rituals involved in the visualization of Tusita Heaven and Maitreya.

## Glossary

Anyang	安陽
bianwen	變文
Cao	曹
chan	禪
<i>Da fang deng tuo luo ni jing</i>	大方等陀羅尼經
Daofa	道法
Daojin	道進
Daoxuan	道宣
Dunhuang	敦煌
Faxian	法顯
foming	佛名
Gaochang	高昌
<i>Gao seng zhuan</i>	高僧傳
guan	觀
<i>Gao chu chuang yan jie qian fo ming jing</i>	過去莊嚴劫千佛名經
<i>Guan fo san mei hai jing</i>	觀佛三昧海經
<i>Guan mi le pu sa shang sheng dou shuai tian jing</i>	觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經
<i>Guan pu xian pu sa xing fa jing</i>	觀普賢菩薩行法經

<i>Guan wu liang shou fo jing</i>	觀無量壽佛經
<i>Guan xu kong zang pu sa jing</i>	觀虛空藏菩薩經
<i>Guan yao wang yao shang er pu sa jing</i>	觀藥王藥上二菩薩經
Guzang	姑臧
Huida	慧達
Huilan	慧覽
Huiquan	慧全
Juqu Jingsheng	沮渠京聲
Juqu Mengxun	沮渠蒙遜
Juqu Mujian	沮渠牧犍
Liangzhou	涼州
Liu Sahe	劉薩訶
<i>Ming seng zhuan</i>	名僧傳
<i>Mingxiangji</i>	冥祥記
Mogao	莫高
Pingcheng	平城
sanmei	三昧
Shentongsi	神通寺
Shilaozhi	釋老志
sujiang	俗講
ta	塔
Tanjing	曇靖
Tanyao	曇曜
<i>Ti wei bo li jing</i>	提謂波利經
Wōnhyo	元曉
<i>Xu Gao Seng Zhuan</i>	續高僧傳
yi yi	邑義
Zhangye	張掖
<i>Zhi guai</i>	志怪
Zhiyan	智嚴



第254窟見取図

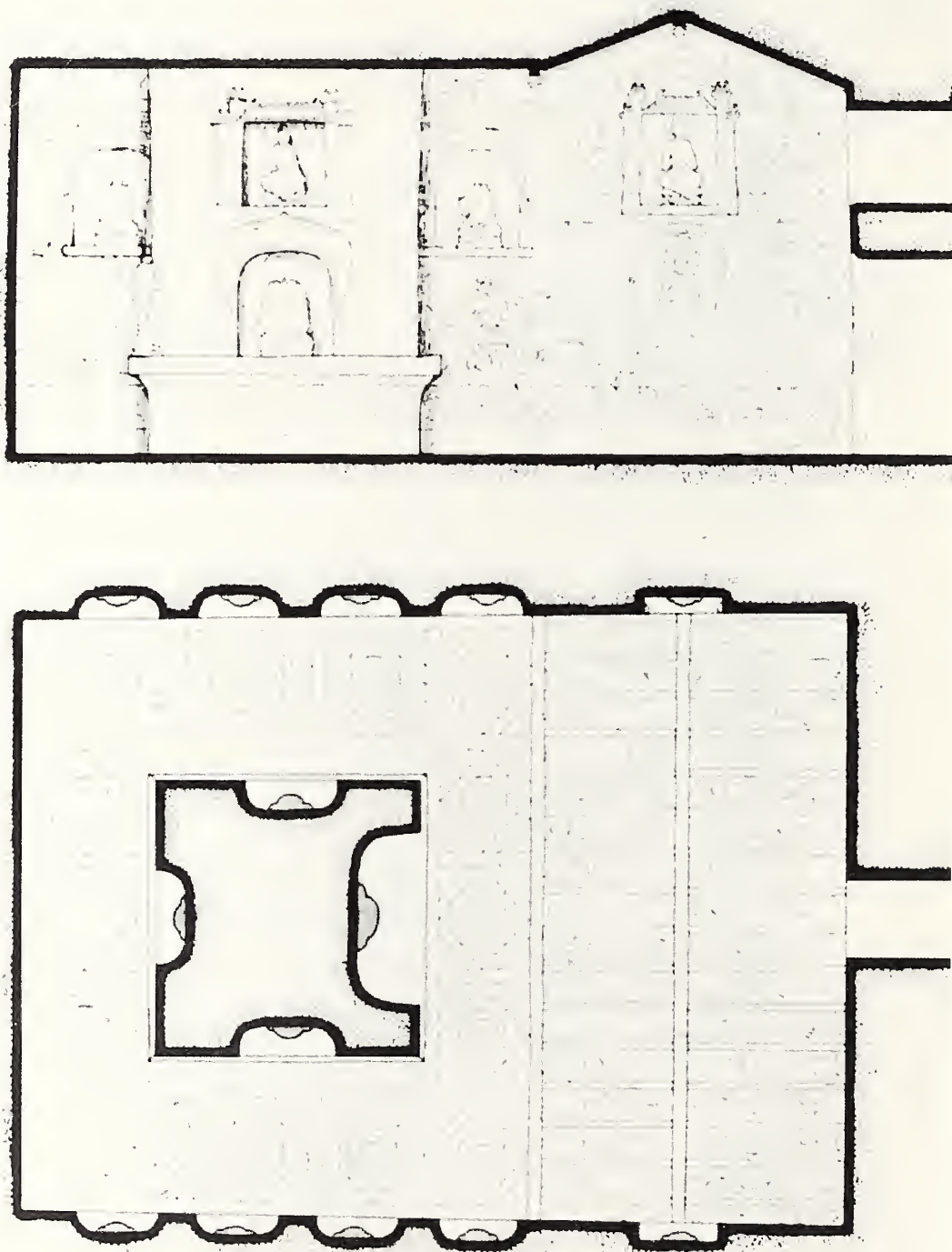


FIG. 1. Plan and elevation, Mogao Cave 254.

After Tonkō Bunbutsu Kenkyūjo, eds., *Tonkō bakukōkutsu*, 5 v., Tokyo, 1980–82, v. 1, p. 260.





FIG. 2. Interior view, Mogao Cave 254. After *Tonkō bakukōkutsu*, v. 1, pl. 26.



FIG. 3. South wall and aisle, Mogao Cave 254.

After Akiyama Terukazu and Saburo Matsubara, *Arts of China*, v. 2, *Buddhist Cave Temples*, Palo Alto, 1969, pl. 9.





FIG. 5. Central pillar and main image, Mogao Cave 254.  
After *Tonkō bakukōkutsu*, v. 1, pl. 26.



FIG. 4. North wall, Mogao Cave 254. After *Tonkō bakukōkutsu*, v. 1, pl. 26.







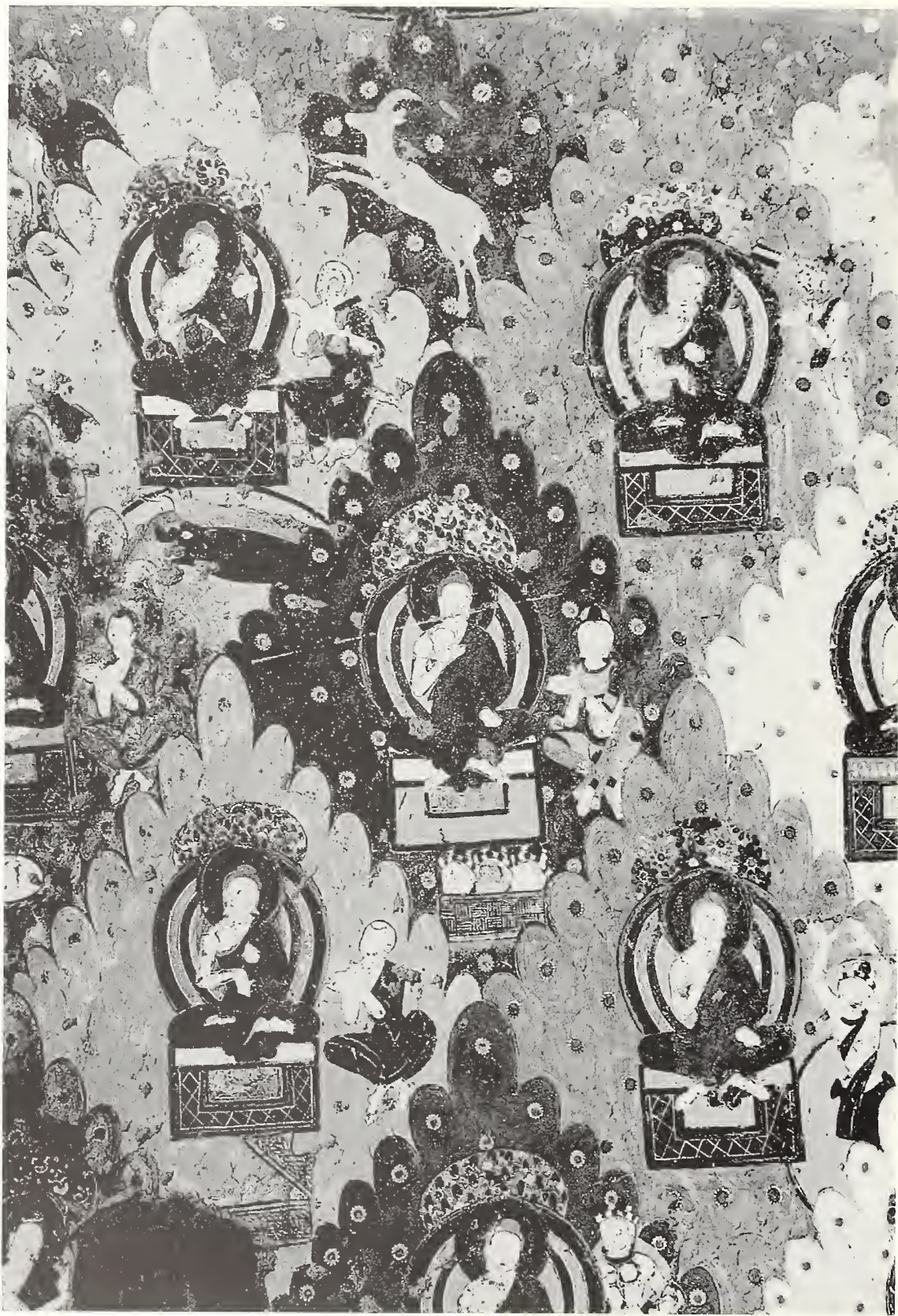


FIG. 8. Ceiling, detail, Kizil Cave 80. After *Kiziru sekutsu*, v. 2, pl. 54.





FIG. 9. Māra's Assault, south wall, Mogao Cave 254.  
After Dunhuang Yanjiusuo, *Zhongguo meishushi lunji*, v. 14, *Dunhuang bihua*, Beijing, 1985, pl. 22.



FIG. 10. Nanda *avadāna*, north wall, Mogao Cave 254. After *Tonkō bakukōkutsu*, v. 1, pl. 31.





FIG. 11. Tiger *jātaka*, south wall, Mogao Cave 254. After *Tonkō bakukōkutsu*, v. 1, pl. 36.



FIG. 12. Śibi *jātaka*, north wall, Mogao Cave 254. After *Tonkō bakukōkutsu*, v. 1, pl. 32.





FIG. 14. Right attendant, main image niche, Mogao Cave 254.  
After *Tonkō bakukōkutsu*, v. 1, pl. 28.



FIG. 13. Left attendant, main image niche, Mogao Cave 254.  
After *Tonkō bakukōkutsu*, v. 1, pl. 27.



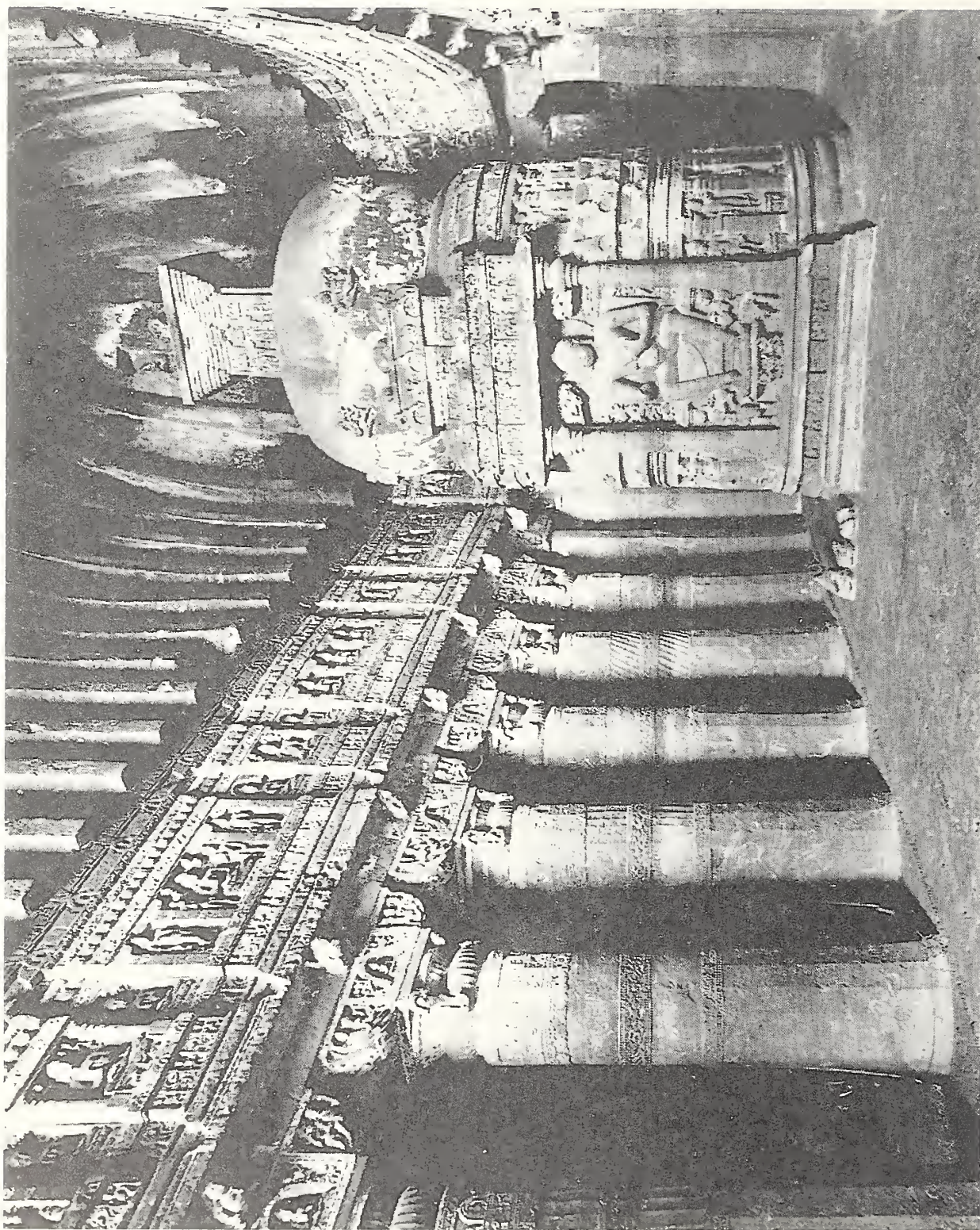


FIG. 15. Stūpa, Ajanta Cave 26. After J. C. Harle, *Art and Architecture of the Indian Subcontinent*, New York, 1986, pl. 93.



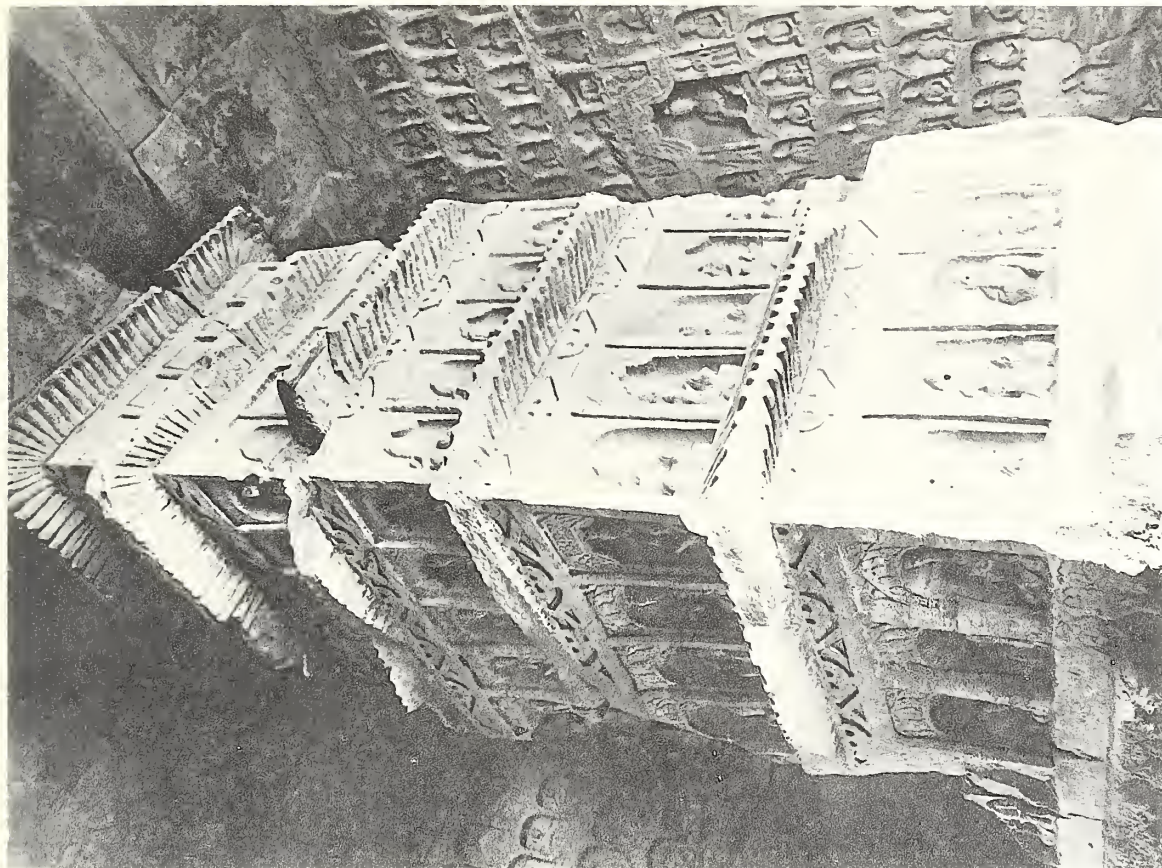


FIG. 17. Central pillar, Yungang Cave 51.  
After *Yungang shiku*, pl. 106.

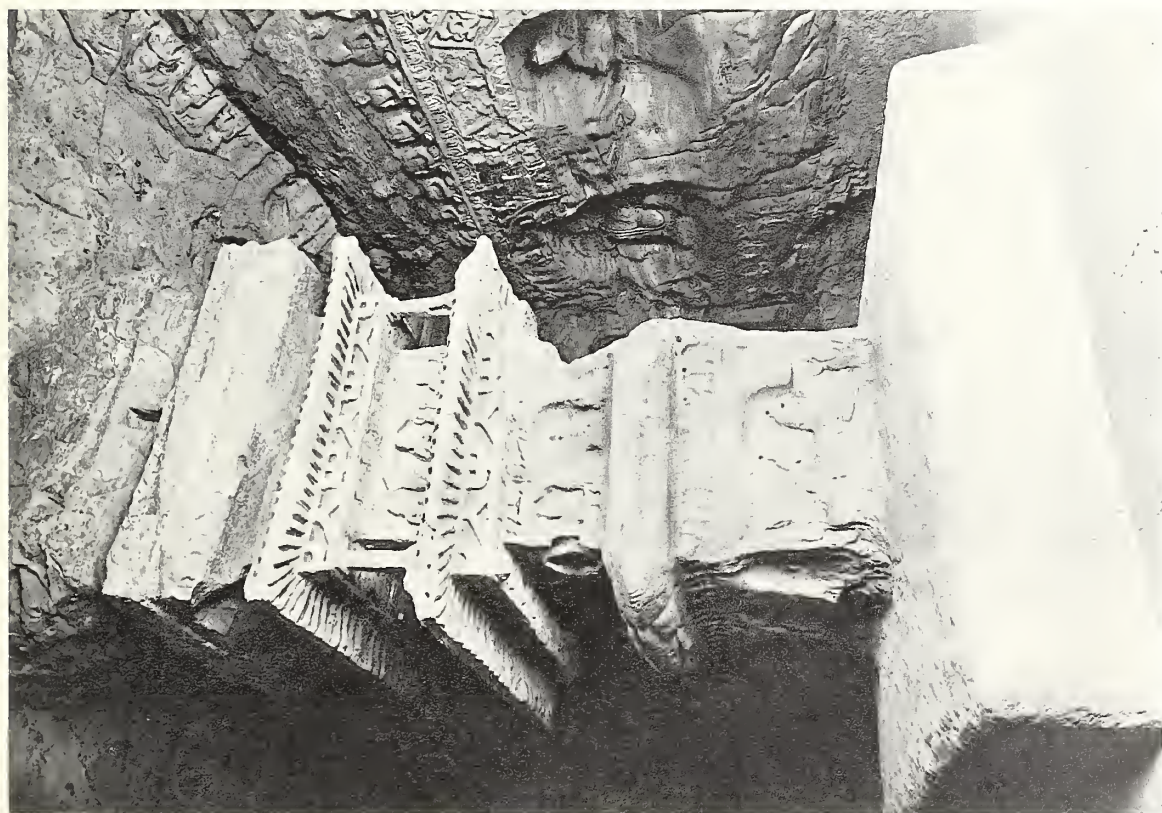


FIG. 16. Central pillar, Yungang Cave 2.  
After Shanxi Sheng Wenwu Gongzuo Weiyunhui, *Yungang shiku*, Beijing, 1977, pl. 5.



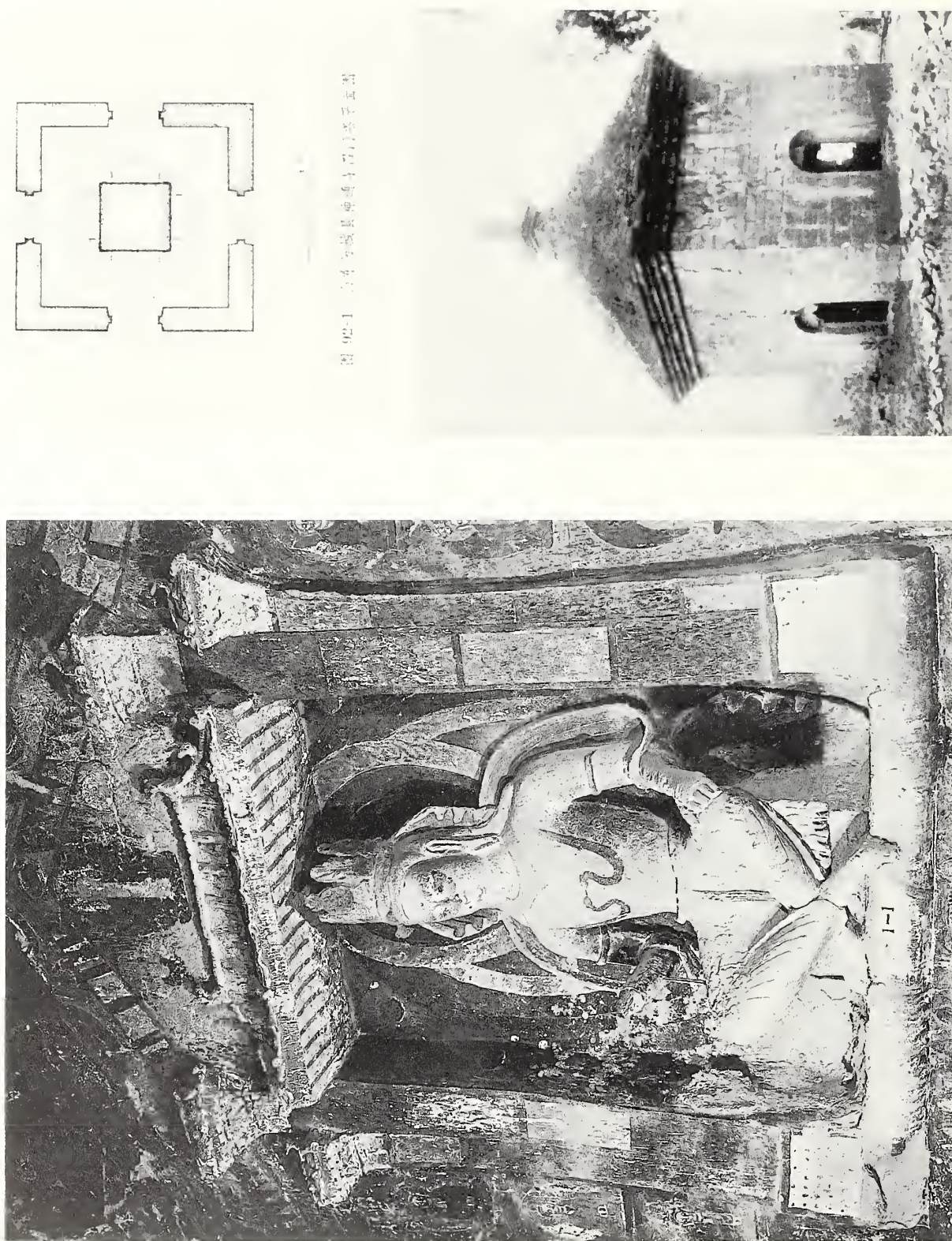


图 92-1 山东龙兴寺神像寺内石塔平面图

FIG. 18. Maureya bodhisattva, south wall, Mogao Cave 254.  
After *Tonkō bokukōkusu*, v. 1, pl. 34.

FIG. 19. Pagoda, Shentongsi, Shandong province.  
After Liu Dunzhen, ed., *Zhongguo gudai jianzhu shi*, 2nd ed.,  
Beijing, 1980, figs. 92-1 and 92-2.





FIG. 20. Temple Cella E.i, Endere. After Aurel Stein, *Ancient Khotan*, Oxford, 1907, fig. 49.



FIG. 21. Temple with central pillar, Gaochang. Photo by author.



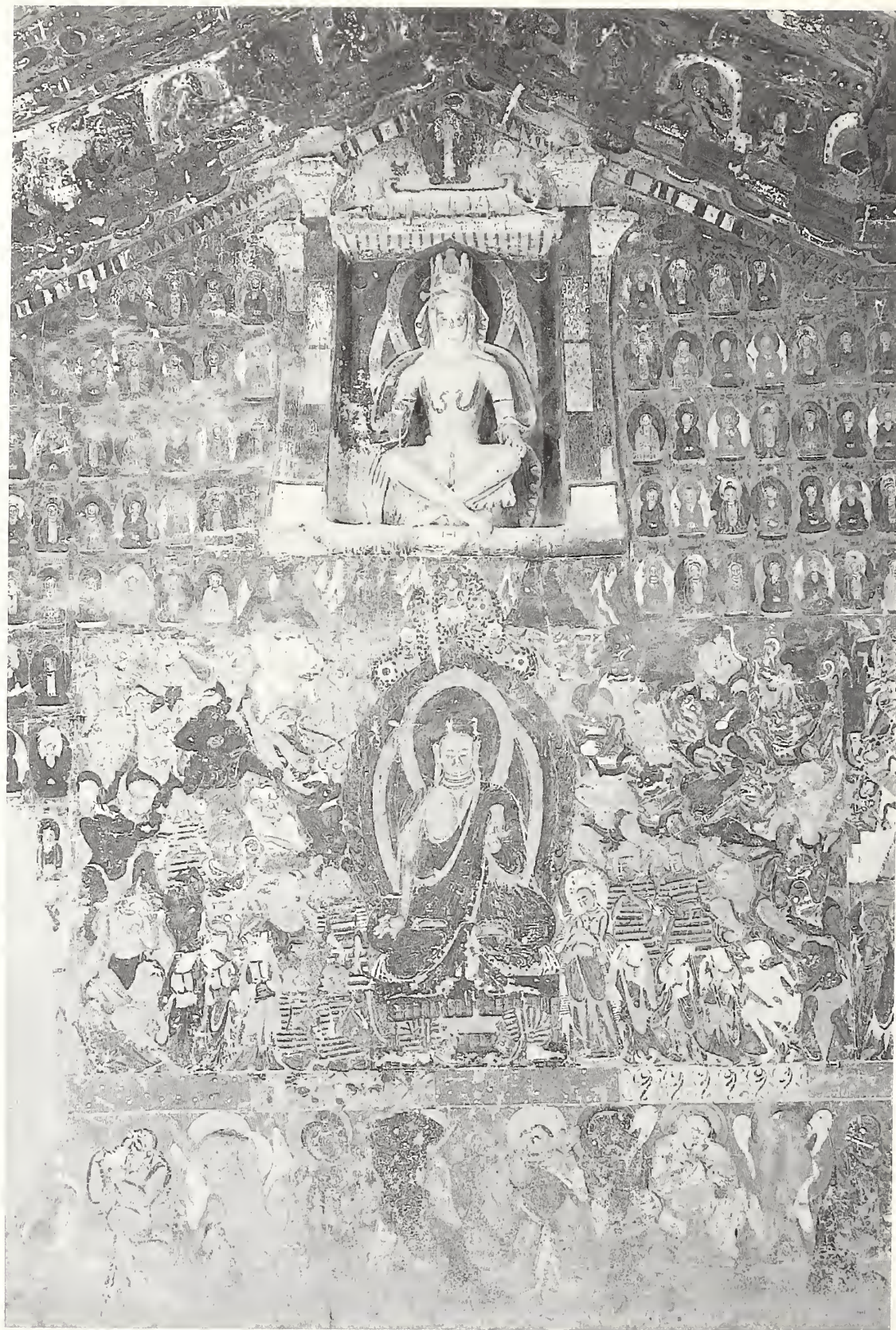


FIG. 22. South wall, Mogao Cave 254. After *Tonkō bakukōkutsu*, v. 1, pl. 33.





FIG. 23. Tiger *jātaka*, Mogao Cave 428. After *Tonkō bakukōkutsu*, v. 1, pl. 168.



FIG. 24. Tiger *jātaka*, detail, Mogao Cave 254. After *Dunhuang bihua*, pl. 19.





# CRANES ABOVE KAIFENG: THE AUSPICIOUS IMAGE AT THE COURT OF HUIZONG

BY PETER C. STURMAN

AMONG THE MANY BEAUTIFUL PAINTINGS ATTRIBUTED TO THE late Northern Song emperor Huizong (r. A.D. 1100–1125), none is so enchanting as the short handscroll entitled “Auspicious Cranes” (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> Twenty white cranes appear against an azure sky above city gates bathed in magical clouds. Colors and patterns harmonize with such wondrous, elegant decorum that the viewer is left wondering how any artist could conceive such otherworldly beauty. Yet, according to Huizong’s own inscription and poem that follows to the left, the painting simply records an actual event witnessed by thousands one evening early in the year 1112 (Fig. 2):

On the evening of the day after *shangyuan*,<sup>2</sup> the *renzhen* year of the Zhenghe reign (February 26, 1112), auspicious clouds suddenly formed in masses and descended about the main gate of the palace, illuminating it. Everyone raised their heads to gaze at them. Suddenly a group of cranes appeared flying in the sky. Two came to perch atop the “owl-tail” ridge-ornaments of the gate, completely at ease and self-composed. The others all wheeled about in the sky, as if responding to some rhythm. Residents of the capital walking about all bowed in reverence, gazing from afar. They sighed at length over the unusual sight. For some time the cranes did not disperse. Then they circled about and flew off, separating at the northwest quarter of the city. Moved by this auspicious sight, I wrote the following poem to record its fact.

In the pure break of day, multi-hued rainbows caress the roof’s ridge,<sup>3</sup>  
The immortal birds, proclaiming good auspices, suddenly arrive in favorable response.<sup>4</sup>  
Wafting about, originally denizens of the Three Immortal Isles,<sup>5</sup>  
Pair after pair, they go on presenting their thousand-year-old forms.<sup>6</sup>  
They seem to be imitating the blue *luan* that roosted atop the jeweled halls,<sup>7</sup>  
Could they possibly be the same as the red geese that congregated at Heaven’s Pond?<sup>8</sup>  
Lingering, they call and cry at the Cinnabar Palace,  
Thus causing the ever-busy common folk to know of their presence.

This ostensibly historical document is painted in the meticulously fine style associated with Huizong’s officially sponsored Painting Academy. As such, it joins a number of paintings attributed to the emperor which, though strongly suspected of being from the hands of academy painters rather than the emperor himself, are essentially unquestioned as representative of the Huizong aesthetic.<sup>9</sup> The issue of authorship is an interesting one, not so much for reflecting what may or may not be the individual hand of Huizong (the traditional concern), but rather because it touches upon what I

consider to be the much more significant issue of style. Gathering support from textual sources, including one written by a contemporary witness to the activities of Huizong’s court, Xu Bangda has argued that the “true” Huizongs are not these fine, jewel-like paintings but another group of paintings attributed to the emperor—mostly ink on paper and of slightly clumsy appearance.<sup>10</sup> Such paintings, Professor Xu continues, would have been very much influenced by the developing *wenren*, or literati aesthetic of the late Northern Song, and their slight touch of awkwardness should be viewed as a positive, cultivated quality.<sup>11</sup> He goes on to associate this group of monochromatic paintings with the style of Xu Xi, the Five Dynasties Period bird-and-flower master of Jiangnan heavily favored by the late Northern Song literati. In contrast, the meticulous *gongbi* style paintings, including “Auspicious Cranes,” are considered to belong to the stylistic tradition of the early Song academicians Huang Quan (A.D. 903–68) and his son Huang Jucai.<sup>12</sup> Undoubtedly, the authenticity of these “literati-style” paintings is much more problematic than the academic-style paintings attributed to Huizong, and they consequently demand much more study. Nevertheless, Xu Bangda calls forth enough evidence to present a significant case for the existence of this other Huizong style.<sup>13</sup> And this, I argue, should make us reevaluate the broader question of the interaction between style and function in the academic-style Huizong paintings, if only by demonstrating the emperor’s awareness and willingness to make use of stylistic alternatives.

The crux of the issue is revealed in Benjamin Rowland’s conclusion that “Huizong’s precise, realistic recording of the surface texture of natural objects was simply the result of his desire to record with loving care the little things that filled his days with pleasure.”<sup>14</sup> When confronted with a meticulously realistic style of depiction, we naturally tend to presume that the artist’s sole concern was to capture the objective appearance of his subject, to have his painting function, in other words, like a photograph. It is a tendency, moreover, wholeheartedly encouraged by such firsthand accounts as Huizong’s own inscription to “Auspicious Cranes.” But as Rowland implicitly suggests by coining the term “magic realism” to describe the Huizong style, and by perceptively analyzing choice Huizong paintings that essentially demonstrate the

unreality of the final image, there is more to a realistic style than simply realism.

This paper will focus on "Auspicious Cranes" as a representative of the refined, academic-style paintings associated with Huizong's name. These paintings claim to represent an unadulterated, objective view of their subjects, but, as I will demonstrate with "Auspicious Cranes," the function of these paintings so strongly suggests an elaborate hidden political agenda that any claim to objectivity is thoroughly compromised. Herein, I believe, lies the key to understanding the rationale behind this rarefied style of painting. I will conclude by examining what I call Huizong's "appropriation of reality" in the larger perspective of Northern Song painting and theory.

### *Auspicious Phenomena at Huizong's Court and the "Xuanhe ruilan ce"*

The appearance of the twenty cranes in the evening sky above Kaifeng on February 26, 1112, was hardly an isolated auspicious event during Huizong's reign. On May 26, 1103, the Grand Astrologer reported to the throne that the Five Planets were all moving in unison in the sky, a reflection of an era of great peace.<sup>15</sup> On September 6, 1107, it was reported that in Hebei the Yellow River had mysteriously risen and cleared for seven days during the previous month, a phenomenon that would repeat itself many times in several different locales over the next few years.<sup>16</sup> Sweet dew, thick as honey and with a lustrous glitter, was found in the niches of the willow trees and other plants around the official buildings of the capital on December 6, 1109. Huizong himself composed a poem for this blessed event.<sup>17</sup> Auspicious grains with branching stalks and multiple ears were found at Caizhou (Runan, Henan Province) and Yuanzhou (Yichun, Jiangxi Province) during the summer of 1110—portents of a bountiful harvest.<sup>18</sup> The magic, brightly colored *lingzhi* fungus was discovered growing by the steps of the Temple of Imperial Ancestors of the Auspicious Tally Palace (Xiangfugong Shengzudian) in Qianzhou (Ganzhou, Jiangxi Province) on December 5, 1111. This was considered to be the ancestors' grateful answer to the profundity of Huizong's filial piety.<sup>19</sup> On February 29 of the following year, a ten-thousand-year-old toad was discovered with the magic fungus growing from its back in Xin'an, just west of the capital.<sup>20</sup> On March 6, 1113, auspicious multi-colored auras called *daiqi* and *chengqi* were seen about the sun.<sup>21</sup> Rocks were found whose natural markings wrote out auspicious messages, such as *ming*, "bright."<sup>22</sup> Other missives from Heaven were found written in purple in cross-sections of cut

trees: *daji*, "great auspiciousness," and *wan Song nian-sui*, "[long live] the Song dynasty for ten thousand years." In the latter instance, which was reported in Wuyi, Zhejiang on October 5, 1113, Heaven demonstrated some calligraphic range to its celestial orthography, writing the first two characters in the seal (*juan*) script and the last two in the standard (*kai*) script.<sup>23</sup> Numerous other auspicious discoveries made during Huizong's reign are found in the historical documents, from huge gold nuggets shaped like auspicious clouds to auspicious clouds shaped like dragons, from so-called phoenixes to *qilin* ("unicorns") born from cows.<sup>24</sup> And these, we must assume, are but a small fraction of those actually reported.

All of these phenomena are known in Chinese as *ruiying*, "auspicious responses." *Ruiying* are not omens *per se*, as they do not portend future events.<sup>25</sup> The emphasis, rather, is on the present: Heaven offers its blessings with the appearances of the strange and wonderful in response to the enlightened rule of its son, Emperor Huizong. *Ruiying* are Heaven's way of communicating with the earthly realm, a fact particularly well illustrated by the literal messages occasionally discovered on rocks and in tree trunks. It is tempting to dismiss this plethora of auspicious responses as nothing more than a manifestation of the superstitious rule of Huizong, an emperor notorious for his devout belief in Daoism. Yet, there is nothing intrinsically Daoist about *ruiying*. They are mentioned in some of China's earliest literature, including Confucius' *Analects*,<sup>26</sup> and they are such an ingrained feature of Chinese epistemology that even the great Han dynasty skeptic Wang Chong (A.D. 27–ca. 100) dared not deny their fundamental validity.<sup>27</sup> Especially in the early centuries of this millennium *ruiying* attracted much attention, earning, as a number of scholars have shown, an important place in the pictorial art of the Eastern Han period.<sup>28</sup> Their popularity also resulted in illustrated compendia (*tu*) that described their various properties and associations. Of this mostly lost literature, Sun Rouzhi's fragmentary and reconstructed *Ruiying tu* of the sixth century is the most valuable.<sup>29</sup>

Every dynasty, and probably every reign, had its fair share of auspicious phenomena. In this regard, there is nothing unusual about the purported events of Huizong's reign. Where Huizong differs is in the much increased emphasis he placed on *ruiying*. The consequence of this was the fostering of circumstances that encouraged more and more sightings. The pattern had already appeared at the very start of his reign, when, in the eleventh lunar month of 1100, Huizong issued a decree requesting that all prefectures and commanderies present their auspicious discoveries to the court; if the actual phenomenon could not be



turned in, a painting should be made describing its appearance.<sup>30</sup> One item recorded on silk was the auspicious grain discovered in Yuanzhou in 1110, seven *chi* tall, with a stalk splitting into two branches, each culminating in seven ears of heavy grain.<sup>31</sup> That painting no longer exists, though a comparable image can be seen in an anonymous hanging scroll in the National Palace Museum, Taipei (Fig. 3).<sup>32</sup> Over time the message was clearly transmitted that Huizong wanted *ruiyi*ng, and *ruiyi*ng he received, in astonishing numbers. There is a steady increase in numbers of auspicious responses through the years of the Zhenghe reign (1111–18), with an apparent peak around 1115, when, for example, on June 5 a staggering 12,060 specimens of the magic fungus were collected by whole villages in Qizhou (Hubei).<sup>33</sup> Back at the court, the prime minister Cai Jing, who was particularly attuned to the emperor's way of thinking, led the various high officials in a constant chorus of congratulatory hymns that praised the auspicious signs raining down from Heaven. The most exemplary of these ornate writings can still be perused in the collected works of Wang Anzhong (1076–1134), editorial director in the Secretariat during the Zhenghe reign and Huizong's personal favorite when it came to creating the lush literary phrases worthy of describing these important phenomena.<sup>34</sup>

For the modern reader who remains skeptical of Heaven's role in the appearance of unicorns and phoenixes, questions immediately arise concerning the credibility of such reports and, in the broader picture, the motives that may underlie Huizong's active promotion of auspicious phenomena. These are both important issues for understanding the psychological climate of Huizong's court—in a manner of speaking, its grasp of reality. Let us address the second question first. Were there specific political motives prompting this encouragement of *ruiyi*ng, something on the order of Wang Mang's manipulation of portents to justify his usurpation of the Han throne, or Tang Taizong's similar actions during the founding of his dynasty?<sup>35</sup> Common sense would lead one to expect *realpolitik* issues to be lurking in the background, and yet, if such issues exist, they are not immediately obvious. Unlike Wang Mang and Tang Taizong, Huizong was not founding or consolidating a new dynasty, nor did he face, to the best of my knowledge, serious challenges to his legitimacy. The only political issue that emerges as potentially related is the campaign to recover the northern territories of You and Yan, areas lost to the Liao during the collapse of the Tang dynasty and much coveted by Huizong as physical proof of his own reign's greatness.<sup>36</sup> A connection is suggested by the fact that the plan to recover the north, according

to Cai Tao, arose at the start of the Zhenghe reign, coinciding with the accelerated pace of *ruiyi*ng sightings.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, if this was a background motivating force, it remains fundamentally different from the issues of legitimacy that invariably arise with the founding of a new political order. There would have been no need to justify recovery of the lost territories, and consequently, if the auspicious responses were related, they would have functioned less as an actual political tool than as a vague expression of wishful thinking.

It is precisely an amorphous blending of reality and unreality that seems to make up Huizong's *ruiyi*ng, and this brings us back to the question of their credibility. From the narration of the auspicious responses given above, it should be clear that in most cases events become *ruiyi*ng through subjective interpretation. When a cow gives birth to a deformed calf, the only inherent truth is that the poor creature is abnormal. It becomes a *qilin* only when that abnormality is interpreted in a positive manner. From our removed perspective we see a clear pattern of the Huizong court eagerly encountering the aberrant and unusual, slight or gross, and in almost every instance interpreting it positively. An excellent example is Cai Tao's account of the toppling of Taihe Mountain in Yiyang (Henan), southwest of the capital. When the news first reached the court, Huizong and Cai Jing were extremely fearful, fully recognizing the metaphorical implications of a mountain (i.e., emperor or dynasty) collapsing. The mood changed to joy, however, when it was announced that considerable quantities of crystal were found within—the mountain's collapse could now be interpreted as the Earth's opening up to present its rarities to the court.<sup>38</sup> To Huizong's credit, there is evidence that not all of the various *ruiyi*ng were accepted indiscriminately—at least one ten-thousand-year-old toad sprouting *lingzhi*, for example, was determined to be a fraud,<sup>39</sup> and the phoenix of 1116 the product of some farmer's wishful thinking. But, on the other hand, evidence of a skeptical attitude is hard to find and, at least in the case of the "flowering toad," compromised by contradictory information: while this strange *ruiyi*ng is on one occasion said to be disproven by the emperor himself, it appears again (yes, there was more than one such toad!), praised as a particularly fantastic auspicious phenomenon in a congratulatory memorial by Wang Anzhong, thus documenting its acceptance.<sup>40</sup> This apparent contradiction seems symptomatic of a court determined to factualize its own created fiction.

In this hazy world where the borders of reality and fiction overlap emerges the auspicious image, an image that acts to confirm its own reality once created. The auspicious image is the retelling of the *ruiyi*ng, and

through that retelling ambiguity is eliminated and subjectivity thoroughly concealed. From the simple, concise statements of the historical records to the richly decorous memorials of Wang Anzhong, the *ruiyi* earn credibility through imperial sponsorship and become fact. When it comes to self-confirmation, however, nothing convinces like a picture,<sup>41</sup> and Huizong saw to it that pictorial records too were made to concretize these fragile truths. The program was an ambitious one—volumes of paintings collectively entitled “Xuanhe ruilan ce” and thus described in Deng Chun’s *Hua ji* of 1167:

The realm was at great peace for many years and various auspicious creatures and objects [appeared], bringing with them good fortune. Memorials [describing them] were submitted daily, and the court scribes continuously recorded [their fact]. Among living creatures there were the red crow,<sup>42</sup> white magpie,<sup>43</sup> heavenly deer,<sup>44</sup> and birds of intricate plumage, all cavorting about the imperial gardens. Of plants and flowers there were the juniper-growing *lingzhi* fungus, the pearl lotus, golden tangerines, double-stemmed bamboo, flowering melons, and pear-leaved crab-apples—stems split and interconnected,<sup>45</sup> too many to enumerate. [The emperor] thereupon chose the most unusual, some fifteen types in all, and sketched their forms in the “red and blue,” entitling the project “Xuanhe ruilan ce,” “The Xuanhe Reign Album of Sagacious Viewing.” There were the various strange and rare plants and flowers such as the *suxin* and *moli* jasmine, fish pelargonium, and the sal tree. The regions from which these plants came were exhaustively surveyed, and the nature and genus of their products studied in great detail. Descriptions were composed to song, and their appearances captured in painting, all to be added as a second volume. Afterwards, jade-colored *lingzhi* appeared, competing in showy beauty by the imperial palaces, and sweet dew fell from the midnight heavens onto the purple bamboo. The *yang* [sun] crow and cinnabar [moon] rabbit, the [five colored] parakeet and snowy eagle, the pheasant from Yueshang, of jade-like substance gleamingly pure,<sup>46</sup> and the *yuzu* chick, golden-hued and brilliant<sup>47</sup>. . . the lotus-nesting tortoise, the free-wheeling phoenix, ten-thousand-year-old rocks, split trunks and double leaves, a banana plant divided in two. . . . All in all there were fifteen different divine objects chosen for the contents of volume three. The fourth volume was composed solely of rare birds and animals of pure white color, each one’s form lovingly described. And on and on they were added, ceaselessly, until the project grew to some thousand volumes in all. For each, the emperor ordered his high officials to write inscriptions at their end. Certainly, in all endeavors past and present, nothing could match this in beauty.<sup>48</sup>

A briefer description appears in Tang Hou’s *Gujin huanjian*, where it is specified that each of the hundreds of volumes was comprised of fifteen sheets of two leaves each.<sup>49</sup> While it could well be argued that the subject matter of most of the extant academic-style paintings firmly attributed to Huizong more or less accords with Deng Chun’s description, three paintings in particular have been singled out as likely survivors of this staggeringly ambitious project: “The Five Colored Parakeet” in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Fig. 4), “Auspicious Dragon Rock” in the Palace

Museum, Beijing (Fig. 5), and “Auspicious Cranes.”<sup>50</sup> That these three paintings were indeed a part of the “Xuanhe ruilan ce” cannot be proven without more information. Nevertheless, their shared formats, measurements, and style practically guarantee that at the least they once belonged to the same album or series of albums.<sup>51</sup> Each composition evenly divides into a painting and an inscription with eulogizing poem written in the “slender gold” calligraphy of Emperor Huizong, and each painting describes in painstakingly beautiful detail subjects that perfectly accord with Deng Chun’s description of the “Xuanhe ruilan ce.”

The “dragon rock,” according to Huizong’s inscription, presided over a particularly magical corner of what one presumes to have been an imperial garden, south of Encircling Emerald Pond (Huanbichi) and west of Fangzhou Bridge (Fangzhouqiao), ready to soar across the facing Surpassing Ocean (Shengying).<sup>52</sup> This is not one of the famed message or glyph rocks described above, though Huizong has written in gold the two characters *xiang long*, “auspicious dragon,” directly on its pitted surface just under the right edge of its water-filled recess at the top (Fig. 6). Rather, it is a rock whose bizarre formation suggests the twisting movements of a dragon “emerging to give shape to an auspicious response.” Dragons are creatures of clouds and rain, Huizong’s poem reminds us, and the rock symbolizes, by association, Heaven’s moist, life-nurturing forces. Perhaps this explains the rock’s unusual pool of water from which grow two yet-unidentified plants.<sup>53</sup> If the dragon rock was interpreted as a symbol of the emperor’s enriching powers, the five colored parakeet served as a reminder of Huizong’s and China’s direct position under Heaven—the center to which the less civilized, outlying regions pay tribute. The parakeet, Huizong tells us, has come to the imperial precincts from Lingbiao, far to the south.<sup>54</sup> It was tame, of noble bearing, and, in keeping with the general association of these rare birds, “capable of uttering many a fine speech.”<sup>55</sup>

From even these brief descriptions it becomes apparent that subtle differences can exist in the symbolic functions of the *ruiyi*. The rock is a dragon, ever-changing, mysterious, and representative of the primal nurturing powers shared by Heaven and Huizong. The parakeet is a glittering jewel from a far-away land, tribute offered to the court in recognition of its omnipotent authority. To the casual glance they appear equally realistic. Yet, given the different manners in which these two *ruiyi* function and the specific associations they engender, how could these images not reveal some degree of that subjective interpretation so central to the very concept of auspicious response? Huizong virtually admits as much. In the inscriptions and poems of both of these paintings one



finds the emperor repeatedly commenting on the inadequacies of his descriptions, whether in words or in pictures.<sup>56</sup> Such polite disclaimers, I believe, are less an admission of technical shortcomings than a reflection of the awareness that the meanings of his subjects are difficult to express. And meanings, we should be aware, are cultural property; more often than not they have little to do with the world of objective fact.

A final word on the “Xuanhe ruilan ce.” As Tang Hou comments, the vastness of the project (up to fifteen thousand paintings) strongly suggests the employment of a number of academy painters. They would have been working in concerted effort, quickly and efficiently, to create images that satisfied the imperial conception. Certainly, they would not have been idly waiting for the *ruiying* to appear, one by one. One need not jump to the conclusion that these three paintings were indeed once a part of the “Xuanhe ruilan ce,” and that they were not painted by Emperor Huizong (his inscriptions, after all, are quite adamant about personal authorship), to recognize the likelihood of some degree of temporal and spatial dislocation between subject and painting. This is a particularly important issue with “Auspicious Cranes” because of the date mentioned in the inscription. Seen alone, the painting immediately appears to have been made on or close to that day, February 26, 1112, but the fact that its two sister scrolls have no such date clearly indicates that February 26, 1112, was simply the date of the appearance of the cranes; there is no reason to presume that it was the date of the painting. In fact, it is more than likely that there was a considerable lapse of time between the purported incident and the painting of the image, perhaps even years. This further underscores the fact that despite the objective view implied by the paintings’ naturalistic style, these images, in their final form, have been refracted through any number of interpretive prisms.

There is little question that the auspicious image played an important role at Huizong’s court. On February 6, 1114, in honor of the *lingzhi* fungus and auspicious multi-eared grains that had become prevalent, Huizong ordered heraldic pennants created to display their images proudly. An order came down the same day for flags of the solar auras, the multi-hued *dai* and *cheng qi*. In the following year images of glyph rocks adorned these regal banners, and on January 4, 1117, the auspicious cranes, which had blessed the realm with their magnificent forms a number of times since Huizong’s accession, earned their flag.<sup>57</sup> These pennants were simply a part of the imperial regalia that accompanied some of the official affairs of the court. Yet they must have been visually stunning—prominent and powerful symbols of Heaven’s favor.<sup>58</sup> For us they signify the degree to which the auspicious

image permeated the atmosphere of Huizong’s court. As Cai Tao has written:

During the Daguan [1107–10] and Zhenghe [1111–17] reigns . . . pure banquets filled the realm. The four barbarian tribes responded to [these] airs and came with knees bent to receive orders [from the throne]. The heavenly auras—generative, enshrouding mists—were also of extraordinary [shape and manner]. There were no untoward affairs in or outside the court, and daily there were only discussions of the rites, music, and auspicious phenomena. One could say it was the ultimate glory of the great peace.<sup>59</sup>

### *Dancing Cranes, Huizong’s Music, and the Lantern Festival*

Before we investigate some of the specific factors that underlie the image of “Auspicious Cranes,” a brief introduction to the Manchurian crane (also known as the Japanese crane, *Grus japonensis*) is in order. It is, by any account, an impressive bird, large (a wing-span up to two-and-a-half meters) and of dramatic black and white plumage with a bright red patch atop its head. On the Asian continent these cranes migrate slightly south from their summer nests in central and eastern Manchuria to eastern China through the autumn and winter months. They are capable of soaring at tremendous heights, well over a mile high, where they are unseen by human eyes but clearly heard, continuously trumpeting with powerful, low guttural calls. Cranes are remarkably long-lived.<sup>60</sup> Such characteristics, and a myriad subtleties, were well known in China from an early date. Many appear in a fragmentary work entitled *Xiang he jing*, *Classic of Crane Physiognomy*, said to have been composed by an immortal of the sixth century B.C. named Lord Fouqiu.<sup>61</sup> The crane, we learn, is a *yang* bird who roams in the *yin*. Its body exalts cleanliness; hence its white color. Its sounds are heard in Heaven; hence its red crown. The crane’s constituent affinities with metal and fire result in a developmental pattern determined by these elements’ respective numbers, nine and seven, when added together. Thus it is that after one hundred sixty years the male and female cranes need only look at each other for her to conceive. And after sixteen hundred years the female bird, mammal-like, gives viviparous birth to the *luan* and *feng* phoenixes. The limits of the crane’s longevity are inestimable. Little wonder it is called the elder of the avian world and the courier of immortals.

In the considerable body of legends, anecdotes, and poems devoted to this sacred bird in China two general themes predominate: the crane’s immortal nature and its toleration of human company (it is inappropriate to speak of “taming” a crane). Duke Yi of Wei (acceded 668 B.C.) was so fond of his cranes that they were paraded around in great carriages like grandees

and dignitaries and awarded official rank.<sup>62</sup> The early Song poet Lin Bu (967–1028) preferred cranes to children (and the blossoming plum to a wife); a chastened Su Shi was in awe of their high-minded independence.<sup>63</sup> As a result of this affection and admiration, the crane was often depicted in painting. An unmatched level of excellence in the individual portrayal of cranes is said to have been attained with the works of the early eighth-century Tang courtier and painter Xue Ji.<sup>64</sup> Huizong, too, was a keen student of the crane's manners. A scroll attributed to him, reproduced many years ago in *Shina nanga taisai*, presents his rendition of "The Six Cranes," a subject made famous by Huang Quan in the middle of the tenth century,<sup>65</sup> and Deng Chun's *Hua ji* describes a longer scroll the emperor painted early in the Zhenghe reign depicting some twenty cranes in various poses.<sup>66</sup>

None of these descriptions, however, reveals the crane's most noteworthy talent, which is dancing. All cranes dance. It may not be the most refined of ballets, but with head bobbing, wings waving, and its body bouncing and twirling about, the sight of a crane dancing is undoubtedly impressive.<sup>67</sup> The peculiar thing about the crane's dance is that it does not appear to coincide with any particular behavioral pattern. Rather, cranes apparently dance for the pure pleasure of it, at any age, in any season, and at any time of the day. Duets may be more common prior to the mating season, but solo and group performances are also seen. A few deft movements on the part of a human partner are sometimes all it takes to get a crane started. A charming detail of an acolyte encouraging two cranes from the fourteenth-century painter Chen Ruyan's "The Land of Immortals" establishes that this was also well known in China (Fig. 7).

Chinese accounts of the crane's propensity for dancing differ from those of Western observers, however, in that they recognize the bird's highly developed appreciation for music. This special gift appears originally to have been associated with a rare breed of jet-black cranes called *yuan he* (primal cranes).<sup>68</sup> When the Yellow Emperor practiced music on Kunlun Mountain, such cranes came to dance by his side. And in a celebrated passage from *Han Feizi* these cranes arrive to witness the marvelous *qin* playing of Master Kuang of the sixth century B.C., court musician to Duke Ping of Jin:

Following the performance of the first part, there came from the south black cranes, two times eight, and assembled at the end of the ridge of the galley roof. After the performance of the second part, they lined up themselves in a row. When the third part was performed, they raised their necks to sing and stretched their wings to dance. Among the notes the pitches of *gong* and *shang* echoed in Heaven; thereby Duke Ping was much pleased and the audience were all amused.<sup>69</sup>

Similar affinities for sublime music were soon recognized in the slightly less rare Manchurian crane. Typically, the bird's musical acumen was coupled with its special role as companion to the gentleman or scholar—one who truly "understands the sounds" (*zhi yin zhe*). This is not a particularly common subject in Chinese painting, but there are pictorial examples of cranes responding gracefully to the *qin* playing of lofty recluses, such as in an eighth-century Tang dynasty mirror of the Shōsōin (Fig. 8),<sup>70</sup> and an anonymous Southern Song fan of late twelfth- to early thirteenth-century date in the Palace Museum, Beijing (Fig. 9). Close to the time of Huizong, Li Gonglin (*ca.* 1049–1106) painted his contemporary Zhao Wu playing the *qin* for the family crane—a tradition, Su Shi tells us, inherited from his father, the morally upright official Zhao Bian (1008–84).<sup>71</sup>

The association of dancing cranes with exceptional music will prove to be the fundamental theme of "Auspicious Cranes." The underlying principle, as described in the passage on the primal cranes in Sun Rouzhi's *Ruiying tu*, is that the cranes arrive when the ruler possesses the virtue of music.<sup>72</sup> In this respect, dancing cranes might be considered slightly mundane manifestations of a principle associated with those most rarefied of Chinese birds, the *feng* and *huang* phoenixes and the *luan*. The appearance of the *feng* and *huang*, immortal birds that embody the essence of benevolence (*ren*), was closely associated with sage governance. They are said to have been common during the reigns of the sage emperors Yao and Shun, perching and nesting atop the palace roofs,<sup>73</sup> and they arrived, gamboling, when Shun's legendary Shao music was performed in nine parts.<sup>74</sup> As for the *luan*, a bird whose attributes are not easily distinguished from the *feng* and *huang*, Sun Rouzhi records that "it recognizes the pitches of the bells; when the bell pitches are [in proper] tune it arrives, singing and dancing in harmony."<sup>75</sup> A perusal of Huizong's poem on "Auspicious Cranes" reveals how the iconography of these musical phoenixes, directly or indirectly, figures prominently in the image of the cranes above Kaifeng.

At least thirteen different dated occasions of the auspicious arrival of cranes during Huizong's reign are documented in historical sources, from 1099 to 1120.<sup>76</sup> February 26, 1112, is not among them, but not all *ruiying* were included in the official histories that survive today. Our understanding of "Auspicious Cranes" is guided by what is described of these occurrences, especially recurring patterns that help delineate the basic cultural composition of this particular *ruiying*. One general point of agreement is that the birds, in keeping with the Manchurian crane's migratory habits, always appear during the late fall and winter months. More significantly, this is a *ruiying* that



is mostly limited to the imperial precincts of the capital at Kaifeng (or at least only recorded as a *ruiying* when the cranes appeared here). Other factors vary, such as the times of day in which the cranes appear and the directions from which they arrive and to which they depart. Moreover, when specified, there proves to be no constancy in the number of cranes that appear each time. Not including the four times “thousands” of cranes are said to have filled the sky, the reported number of birds are ten during the ninth lunar month, 1105; two in the winter of 1106; twenty-four late in 1112; four in the tenth month, 1113; sixteen in the ninth month, 1118; and, the one odd-numbered exception, five that came on December 10, 1118, apparently as not unwelcome gate-crashers to Huizong’s birthday celebration at the Palace of Accumulated Auspices (Chuxianggong). This is not to presume a complete absence of significance to the number of cranes—numerology has always been a subject of fascination in China, particularly to Daoist-inclined emperors, and it is a striking fact that with only one exception it is always an even number of cranes that arrive—but beyond this any inherent meaning in their numbers is unclear. Despite this variation, the description of the twenty-four cranes that arrived at midday during a banquet for assistant officials held at the Extended Happiness Palace (Yanfugong) on December 13, 1112, may suggest how to read the disposition of the twenty cranes depicted in Huizong’s painting. According to Cai Jing and others, the cranes came from the west and circled about in the sky above the Hall of Sagacious Planning (Ruimodian) before dividing into three groups and flying off in different directions. We will return to this.

The common denominator determining the appearance of the cranes has already been suggested: their affinity for beautiful music. The cranes consistently arrive during official celebrations, especially ritual services and banquets, apparently as an attentive and uninhibited audience to the accompanying musical performances.<sup>77</sup> In this respect the cranes are simply confirming a cultural pattern that had been established as early as Master Kuang’s *qin* playing for Lord Ping of Jin. To appreciate the full significance of the cranes that visited Kaifeng in the early 1100s, however, one must know more about Huizong’s music. As Kenneth DeWoskin and others have well described, music was considered the purest medium of communication in China, capable of being sublimely self-expressive and morally affecting at both personal and public levels.<sup>78</sup> It was of paramount importance to the imperial court, for, together with the rites, it provided the essential physical and moral definition to dynastic rule. A nation’s greatness or degeneracy was audible in its music;<sup>79</sup> the music of the rituals, when

proper, assured alignment with the powers above, hastened the distance from earth to Heaven, and by consequence strengthened the bond of its Mandate. But to play the proper music one must know the proper tones, and this had proven a perpetual, vexing problem since the Han dynasty, as it was presumed that the standard pitches established by the sages of antiquity had long been lost.<sup>80</sup> Various solutions had been proposed and tried but none, according to Huizong, that could be considered successful in attaining the elusive perfection of the standard *huangzhong* pitch. As described by Liu Bing (*jinshi* 1100), the quality of court music had particularly degenerated during the Five Dynasties Period:

In the chaos and destruction of the Five Dynasties Period the musical tones were scattered and lost. Zhou Shizong [r. 954–59], seeing that the music was unresolved, inquired of his craftsmen, but none was able to address the problem. He thereupon ordered Wang Pu to investigate and establish a new system. [Wang’s] model, however, proved vulgar and lowly, and the sounds were harsh and agitated. It was not simply a question of Wang Pu’s knowledge being insufficient to establish the subtle; these harsh and agitated sounds were an appropriate reflection of the times.<sup>81</sup>

Liu goes on to describe the various attempts by Song emperors and their ministers to rectify the tones. He concludes, however, that “all of the pitch levels that resulted were ultimately derived from Wang Pu’s efforts; none could, in transcendent fashion, be established independently.” Huizong sought to rectify this inherited state of affairs. For this ambitious emperor, however, the goal was not simply to raise the quality of his music to the level prior to the Five Dynasties Period. He brought with his accession the majestic goal of creating an imperial rule that would surpass even those of the Han and Tang dynasties, and his music would provide the proof. According to Liu Bing’s account, the music of the Song court at this time was in a state of absolute cacophony, mirroring the profusion of theories and methods that had arisen in the absence of canonical works (presumed to have been lost prior to the Han). Disdaining the endless debates of the more conventional music scholars, Huizong looked for an “extraordinary person” (*yiren*), whom he found in a former soldier from Western Shu (Sichuan) named Wei Hanjin. Wei claimed to have received the secrets of the *ding* tripods and music from a purported Tang dynasty immortal named Li Liang (sometimes called Li Babai, or “Li Eight Hundred”) who was conversant with the “body as measurement” methods derived from the Yellow Emperor and Music Master Kui, who served the sage emperor Yu. According to an official communication submitted by Wei Hanjin on February 27, 1104, the sublime Dajuan music, established by the Yellow Emperor

and maintained over a number of succeeding generations, was lost when the instruments were washed away during the great floods. Yu, in reconstituting the proper tones, adopted the Yellow Emperor's original method of using the fingers on his left hand as standards of length for the pitch pipes. The middle, fourth, and fifth fingers, or "lord," "officials," and "objects" fingers, were used to ascertain, respectively, the *gong*, *shang*, and *yu* tones of the Chinese five-fold division of sound. The first finger and thumb, "people" and "affairs," which correspond to the *jiao* and *zheng* tones, were left out "because people and affairs are governed by the ruler and officials, and nourished with objects." As each finger is divided into three joints, the combined nine sections of the three last fingers were presumed to establish the nine *cun* length of the *huangzhong*. From the *huangzhong* the other eleven pitches could be generated.<sup>82</sup>

It is for the musicologists to determine the viability of Wei Hanjin's theories.<sup>83</sup> For our purposes it is enough to recognize that Wei Hanjin's proposal had immense attraction to the egotistical and gullible young Huizong. In the first month of 1105 Huizong turned twenty-four (*sui*), the optimum age for "proper finger length," especially as the number suggested certain magical properties by being divisible in multiples of four and six or three and eight.<sup>84</sup> With the pitches thus settled, beautiful sounds emerged, "and all who heard it were glad of heart; harmonious singing and euphonious airs were born spontaneously."<sup>85</sup> In the eighth month of the same year the new music was completed and christened Dasheng, "Great Brightness."

Another aspect of Wei Hanjin's expertise was actually put to good use prior to his application of the "imperial digit" method that led to Huizong's reformation of the court music. This was his knowledge of the Nine Tripods. The original Nine Tripods, forged with the metals of China's nine regions during the reign of the sage emperor Yu, had for all later dynasties served as powerful symbols of China's sovereignty over its far-flung territories. It is thus little wonder that in Huizong's program to structure potent symbolic apparatuses the forging of his own Nine Tripods took early precedence. There apparently was some link between the Nine Tripods and the new court music that is now not entirely clear.<sup>86</sup> Probably it was purely ceremonial—the solemn importance of the rituals associated with the tripods deserving of worthy sounds. In any case, it was in conjunction with Wei Hanjin's forging of the Nine Tripods in the first month of 1104 that the cranes made their first true appearance, undoubtedly heralding the new music that was in the process of being elicited from Huizong's left hand. Cai Tao describes the forging with marvelous atmosphere,

especially the solemn, sleepless pacing of the emperor watching a night sky lit with an eerie red glow. With the establishment of the tripods in their individual chambers within the Nine Movements Palace (*Jiucheng-gong*),<sup>87</sup> tens of thousands of cranes covered the sky. The following day, as Huizong made a personal inspection, the cranes reappeared above multi-hued, light-radiating clouds.<sup>88</sup> According to the *Songshi*, this took place in the eighth month, 1105, just a few days before the formal naming of the new music.<sup>89</sup> In the ninth month, 1105, the ceremonial music for the tripods was completed, and the emperor assembled his officials in the Hall of Great Celebration (*Daqingdian*) to receive their congratulations. It was on this day that the new Dasheng music was officially inaugurated. As the new music played ten cranes appeared, circling and crying in the sky.<sup>90</sup> A year later, in the winter of 1106, two cranes appeared during the services for the Great Tripod (*dingnai*). According to Huizong's own "Record of the Dasheng Music" (written on September 16, 1110), "After this, every time the music was played the cranes would appear—a mutual calling between form [music] and shadows [cranes]."<sup>91</sup>

It becomes a likely assumption that Huizong's new music was played the evening of February 26, 1112, and that it was in response to this music that the twenty cranes entered the skies of Kaifeng to pirouette above the main palace gate. In fact, we can be much more precise in our assumptions of what took place that evening, and even what is left unseen, beyond the borders of the painting. The day after *shangyuan*, the sixteenth day of the first lunar month, is the third day of the Lantern Festival, which, as Cai Tao has written, attained a level of unmatched grandeur during his dynasty.<sup>92</sup> Hashima Kazuhiko and Patricia Sieber have well demonstrated the importance of the Lantern Festival during the Northern Song.<sup>93</sup> It was an open and prolonged celebration utilized by the court to establish the public image of a benevolent yet powerful emperor whose primary concern is the welfare of his subjects. On the one hand, the splendor of the court was displayed in fullest fashion, with elaborate banquets for the assembled officials and a magnificent lantern display to impress, among others, foreign envoys. But the Lantern Festival was also the occasion when the emperor and his officials were presented at their most visible and approachable, joining with the populace in their appreciation of the colorful lights and praying for their well-being. The people, in turn, announced their wish for the emperor's longevity. It was a celebration of that most fundamental of Chinese ideals: the unity of the emperor and his people.

During the five nights of the Lantern Festival residents of the capital city were allowed to roam freely, viewing the various public displays of popular



entertainment amidst a background of constant music and dancing.<sup>94</sup> Undoubtedly, however, the central focus of the celebrations was precisely below the cloud-kissed roofs so beautifully detailed in "Auspicious Cranes." This is the main gate to the palace (*duanmen*), the central south-facing gate otherwise known as Xuandemen, The Gate of Proclaimed Virtue. It is described as being comprised of five aligned gateways, glistening with red lacquer and golden nails, covered with bricks and stones interspersed with intricate inlaid carvings of flying dragons among the clouds, and roofed with brightly reflecting green ceramic tiles (some of these features are evident in color reproductions of the painting).<sup>95</sup> Across from the gate the towering Lantern Mountain, festooned with strips of colored silk, was built for the viewing pleasure of the strollers who congregated in the arcades along the main avenue.<sup>96</sup> A large plaque inscribed with gold ink was set atop it, pronouncing the happiness shared between the reign designation (i.e., emperor) and common people.<sup>97</sup> Between the mountain and the gate two tall poles decorated with pieces of colored silk were set up in a large, fenced-off area. Hanging from them were *papier-mâché* effigies of various popular dramatic characters, which, dancing in the wind, "looked just like flying immortals." On a tented platform music and opera were performed by musicians who served the government in a lesser capacity, and on either side, soldiers displayed their martial skills with some entertainment of their own.<sup>98</sup> To cite Huizong's own verse, "Here's a riot of music and songs like a cauldron boiling."<sup>99</sup> Little wonder the cranes came the evening of February 26, 1112—what intelligent bird could resist such theatre?

Difficult as it is to limit discussion of such rich topics as Huizong's music, the forging and worship of the Nine Tripods, and the Lantern Festival to such thumb-nail sketches, it is necessary lest we lose sight of the cranes altogether in the extraordinary setting of Huizong's court. What emerges with clarity is the intricate interweaving of Huizong's complex organization of symbolic political actions with objective fact. The results are paintings such as "Auspicious Cranes," whose formal language bespeaks truth but whose content is inseparable from the personal motivations of an ambitious emperor and the elaborate constructs he built to give them form. Thus introduced to the essential referents and *modus operandi* of Huizong's dialectics, we are prepared to analyze the painting.

Two factors must be recognized as the primary determinants in the arrival of the cranes: Huizong's reformation of the court music and the specific occasion of the Lantern Festival with its attendant activities under the main gate leading to the palace. One might question the compatibility of the refined court music

with the kinds of popular entertainments described by Meng Yuanlao, but it must be remembered that what Huizong's fingers had provided was a system of pitches that would then generate all kinds of music, and according to the Confucian theory of music, even the most popular songs ultimately reflected the virtue of the reign. In fact, herein lies the true auspiciousness of this *ruiying*: it is Heaven's response to the harmony that exists between the highest and lowest elements of society, precisely the Lantern Festival's object of celebration. Consequently, the rhythm mentioned in Huizong's inscription to which the cranes seem to be responding cannot simply be attributed, say, to the fluttering of the *papier-mâché* dolls hung from the tall poles, which, after all, must have appeared very encouraging from above (cf. Fig. 7). Rather, they are responding to a much more pervasive and profound air generated by the emperor's virtue and given audible form in his people's music. This is important for our understanding of the painting because it thus invests the disposition of the cranes with meaning.

Our analysis of the image of these cranes above Kaifeng, in the absence of informative contemporary descriptions, relies first and foremost on the internal logic of the image itself. One observation provided by the historical records, however, may offer us a point of departure. This is, as mentioned earlier, the division of the twenty-four cranes that arrived later that same year into three groups as they flew off from the palace. Twenty-four, we are reminded, was Huizong's age when his fingers were first measured for the pitches, and the significance of the number appears to have at least partly derived from its possible division into various multiples (three by eight and four by six are both mentioned in the *Song chao shishi*). Thus, while never specified, given the Chinese love of numerical balance, it seems likely that these cranes divided into equal parties of eight. Let us presume that this division into groups is what cranes do when they visit the palace.<sup>100</sup> Discounting the two cranes resting atop the roof ridge in "Auspicious Cranes," we are left with another number that is multiply divisible, eighteen (three by six and two by nine, or vice versa). After careful consideration, I have concluded that while there are no clear-cut divisions evident, reading the cranes as three groups of six helps to establish a certain pattern to their design. In my proposed groupings I have followed the rule that, as the cranes are in perpetual movement, one crane is related to another less by spatial proximity than by shared direction, especially as suggested by the direction of their trailing legs. The first group is the easiest to determine, introduced by the two cranes entering the scene from the upper left. These actually are the last two of a group led by one crane nearing the right edge of the painting (Fig. 10).



The second group is traced by presuming a subsequent abrupt turning upwards and back to the center. At the height of this climb the cranes suddenly swoop back down over the center of the roof before once more beginning to climb (Fig. 11). Another presumed shift of direction (back to the right) would lead to the third group, which circles over the top and then back around, in essence beginning the whole pattern over again but from the other direction (Fig. 12). What we discover is a spatiotemporal design defined by a unidirectional, linear pattern, which, once repeated, would create the form of a figure eight. At this point of the performance it would seem to suggest something suspiciously like the Daoist *taiji* diagram, but there is too much imprecision in this analysis to jump to such interesting conclusions.

While one might argue about the specific groupings of the cranes, or even whether such groupings are valid in this painting, the overall pattern that I have described is substantiated by other sources. Of these, the most important is undoubtedly the classic literary description of dancing cranes in China, Zhao Bao's (d. A.D. 466) "Rhapsody on the Dancing Cranes."<sup>101</sup> This well-known poem, which shares with "Auspicious Cranes" both time (winter) and setting (the imperial palace), would undoubtedly have been known to whoever made this painting and in all likelihood played some role in the formation of its image. The language it uses to describe the flight of the cranes is by nature somewhat imprecise, but it nevertheless essentially confirms a pattern of broad, vertical, circular movements, with the birds hesitating at the top of their arcs before suddenly swooping down again:

It begins with the continuous beating of wings, like the prancing phoenix,  
And ends with the ceaseless turnings of bounding dragons.  
Lingering movements, hesitations,  
Then swiftly, a sudden rushing collapse.<sup>102</sup>

The poem goes on to describe an intricate pattern that seems alternately to expand and contract, as the birds start to fly off only to wheel back around and converge once more upon the center. Even more strikingly, however, the figure-eight pattern suggested by the painting's configuration of cranes comes remarkably close to a Western observer's careful description of the dance of European cranes:

A bird dancing alone opens his wings, traces the figure eight with fast steps, turns around and runs back, retracing the eight, stops, bows low several times, jumps about a meter high to the right and to the left while his long legs dangle down in the opposite direction; then he picks up a piece of bark or reed grass, or any other object in reach, throws it high up, catches it, then, with a last jerk, stands erect very quietly, shakes his plumage, and the whole performance is over.<sup>103</sup>

These two independent descriptions would seem to confirm that the painter of "Auspicious Cranes," in the best of Song traditions, was a keen observer of the actual flying patterns of cranes. Nevertheless, the perfection of their configuration, with relatively even spacing between the birds and no overlapping, and the precise uniformity of their description are clear indications of human interpretation. This, in other words, is not so much the way cranes appear, but the way cranes should appear, especially when dancing. Bao Zhao's rhapsody, again, may have provided inspiration. In one line their ranks are likened to the orderly patterns of a net, and in another they "Approach the 'crossroads' in ordered flight, / Near the 'forks' with measured pacings."<sup>104</sup> In short, these are cranes engaged in an elegant, formally choreographed dance. I suspect that in the human sphere, probably at the court, there was actually a crane dance that was at once patterned after the birds' natural movements but also structured and formalized in a manner consistent with the elegance one associates with Huizong. If so, in all likelihood this would have provided the pattern for "Auspicious Cranes." Unfortunately, whether or not the painting does reflect an actual dance of Huizong's court will probably remain forever unknown. With the fall of the Northern Song in 1126 almost all of the achievements in music during his reign were destroyed—the instruments, the music, the manuals, and the dancing charts.<sup>105</sup>

On this holiday evening so rich in symbolic meaning, twenty cranes descend on the main palace gate to confirm Heaven's blessing, dancing to the sounds derived from that most perfect of instruments, the imperial body itself. Their pattern mirrors that perfection. As the contemporary observer Liu Bing explained:

It is said, if one does not see the form, one should investigate its shadow. Those who understand music are indeed few, but through the blessing of the birds one can establish the harmony of the sounds. . . . Sounds that are cacophonous and agitated absolutely cannot be used in a reign of glory and splendor.<sup>106</sup>

### *An Auspicious Patina*

There is a final point to be made about Huizong's reformation of the music that has important ramifications for "Auspicious Cranes." The fact that it was Huizong's here-and-now body that was used to determine the proper lengths and proportions of the pitch pipes tends to obscure the fact that Wei Hanjin and the emperor considered this to be the method of high antiquity. From Huizong's perspective, for well over a thousand years the ways of antiquity had been lost. Specifically, the proper forms of the music and rites had become buried under the litter of successive

generations and grossly distorted by later attempts to recover them. It was Huizong's great ambition to bridge the chasm that separated his reign from the times of perfect rule under the sage emperors Yao and Shun.

In ancient times Yao had [his music, called] Dazhang and Shun had Dashao.<sup>107</sup> The kings of the Three Ancient Dynasties [Xia, Shang, and Zhou] each gave their music a different name. Today we chase back a thousand years to create the standards for our dynasty. Thus, it is appropriate that it be named Dasheng, "The Great Brightness." I will make sacrifices at the suburban temples, make offerings to the ghosts and spirits, harmonize the ten thousand lands, and share it with all under Heaven. Will that not be beautiful?<sup>108</sup>

What gave Huizong the confidence to make such a lofty proclamation was not only the discovery of "Li Liang's pupil, who emerged from the lowly files of the soldiery," but also "the instruments of 'Brilliance' and 'Stalks' where the Mandate was first received."<sup>109</sup> What Huizong alludes to in his "Record of the Dasheng Music" are six ancient bronze bells that were discovered in the tenth lunar month of 1104 during excavations of a palace at the southern capital of Yingtianfu (near Shangqiu, Henan) (Fig. 13). On each of the bells was the inscription *Song gong cheng zhi jing zhong*, which was interpreted as reading, "The *jing* [Stalk] bells of Gongcheng of Song" (Fig. 14).<sup>110</sup> The unearthing of any ancient bronze relic was considered auspicious, but this particular find was extraordinary. The area near Yingtianfu, the old capital region of the state of Song during the Spring and Autumn Period, was where Song Taizu (r. 960–76) assumed the mandate to found the Song dynasty. The ancient state of Song was itself established by descendants of the Shang dynasty, who traced their origins back to Zhuan Xu, grandson of the Yellow Emperor and one of the legendary emperors of high antiquity. Zhuan Xu's music was called Wujing, "Five Stalks"; the music of his successor, Di Ku, was entitled Liuying, "Six Brilliances."<sup>111</sup> Thus, it was believed that these bells preserved the orthodox line of transmission of Zhuan Xu's music into the Zhou dynasty. It was a coincidence of such monumental proportions that even the most skeptical of minds must have recognized this as a blessing from Heaven. Here were bells whose inscriptions, at least according to the Song epigraphers,<sup>112</sup> pronounced the music of high antiquity, discovered near the very spot Taizu founded the Song dynasty. And as if this were not enough to nudge Huizong to action, one could also interpret the inscription as reading, "The *jing* bells created by the lord of Song." A glyph rock could hardly put it more suggestively.

The discovery of the six ancient bells provided Huizong's initial inspiration to recover the true pitches

and establish his own music. Shortly after the Nine Tripods were cast, Huizong and Wei Hanjin began to forge the new instruments, of which a new set of bells closely modeled after the six ancient bells of the ancient state of Song were a first priority. As Richard Rudolph, Li Wenxin, Chen Mengjia, and James Watt have already shown, extraordinary objects sometimes earn a rare piece of immortality—a number of Huizong's bells have miraculously survived to the present day (Fig. 15).<sup>113</sup>

The six bells found at Yingtianfu, in fact, were only one example of ancient relics finding their way into Huizong's court to affect profoundly the shape and form of its ritual operations. Mysterious jades emerged, such as the dark primal *gui(a)*,<sup>114</sup> and most notably, ritual bronzes of Shang and Zhou dynasty date. Such bronzes had become an ever-increasing focus of scholarly attention since the first true pioneering steps of archaeology were taken by Ouyang Xiu (1007–72) and Liu Chang (1019–68) in the mid-eleventh century, and the important advances of their study by Li Gonglin closer to the time of Huizong's accession. They were hardly, however, simply objects for dry academic inquiry. Like the bells, the ritual bronzes were perceived as providing a direct line of communication with the utopian age of the sage kings, and the opportunity to put them to good use was not lost on the emperor.<sup>115</sup>

In a proclamation delivered in the seventh month, 1113, Huizong announced his intention to undertake a broad reformation of the rites. The impetus had come from the more than five hundred vessels of the "three ancient dynasties" that now graced his imperial collection. In the process of having the vessels sketched, catalogued, and exhaustively studied, it had become embarrassingly obvious that there was little resemblance between these venerable objects and the vessels used in the current court rituals. "We are far, far away from antiquity," Huizong lamented, "and the rites have not been passed down to us. . . . I have instructed the Institute of Rites to discuss the unfolding of [the rites'] history and to submit a plan. I will examine its recommendations and decide what changes must be wrought in correcting the base errors of our dynasty. I hope that [in this manner] the laws of our ancestor kings will be passed down to future generations."<sup>116</sup> Three months later, in the tenth month, 1113, he and an entourage led by one hundred Daoist priests embarked for the suburbs of the capital to perform the ritual worship to Heaven. Mirroring the procession on earth, an apparition of figures, chariots, and horses appeared atop the clouds towering high in the sky, and all said Heaven and man were in mutual accord.<sup>117</sup>

Over the next few years Huizong culminated his reformation with the casting of new ritual vessels for



Song. These vessels were meant to be immortal manifestations of the glory of Song, to survive for ten thousand generations, just as those now filling Huizong's palaces had survived. To fulfill this ambition Huizong established the Ritual Regulations Service (*lizhi ju*) and appointed Zhai Ruwen (1072–1141) consultant.

The next year [1114] Heaven bestowed a *gui(b)* ceremonial vessel on the emperor, who thus received the beauty of Heaven's Dao. He issued a decree ordering the officials of the rites to rectify the base guesswork of the scholars of Han and Tang, to maintain the methods and laws of the Three Ancient Dynasties, to investigate the images of antiquity, and to illuminate virtue in the ritual vessels. [This applied to] all the various vessels used in the worships to Heaven, Earth, and the ancestors. Lord Zhai [Ruwen] was specifically ordered by the emperor to examine and determine the standards and rules of the Three Ancient Dynasties. Thus, the vessels were regulated and the merit engraved for the gods of Heaven, Earth, the ancestors, and the deceased father of the emperor. Thereupon the vessels of Song were brought to completion and the splendor of Shang and Zhou matched.<sup>118</sup>

In its relentless pursuit of confirmation of the present, Huizong's court was hopelessly immersed in the distant past. Of all the auspicious phenomena prominently displayed, there was none quite so compelling as the archaic bronzes; nothing could more concretely symbolize the emperor's presumed attunement to the righteous ways of high antiquity. Huizong, on occasion, would proudly lead his officials on a tour of these treasures in the Hall of Revered Governance (*Chongzhengdian*) and other repositories.<sup>119</sup> Towards the end of his reign such tours may well have been exhausting affairs: from the five hundred or so vessels mentioned in Huizong's decree of 1113, the imperial collection of ancient bronzes, according to Cai Tao, swelled to more than six thousand during the Zhenghe reign and ten thousand during the Xuanhe (1119–25).<sup>120</sup> Ye Mengde (1077–1148) provides a vivid account of the situation at the very end of the Northern Song:

During the Xuanhe reign the palace valued highly ancient vessels. Scholars whose collections contained the remnants of the Three Ancient Dynasties, Qin and Han, daring not to hide them, presented them to the emperor. Dealers actively began to seek them, and prices became incomparably high. One vessel would sell for one thousand strings of cash. As profits soared, people began to scrape the mountains, dredge the swamps, and desecrate old tombs. No place was left untouched.<sup>121</sup>

The full significance of "Auspicious Cranes" eludes us if we fail to see it in the glowing light of Huizong's infatuation with the ways of antiquity. Among the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of ancient tombs unearthed in the search for archaic ritual bronzes during Huizong's reign, a high proportion must have been

those of the Han dynasty. And if recent archaeological excavations are any guide, then it is extremely likely that Huizong's court was very familiar with the kinds of relief carvings of Eastern Han date so beautifully represented by the large limestone slab of figures feasting in a palace in the Metropolitan Museum collection (Fig. 16). This particular example, dated A.D. 114, is said to have been found near Jinbingxian, Shandong province,<sup>122</sup> though the scene it presents is repeated, with variations, in numerous second-century tombs uncovered within a radius of less than two hundred miles from the capital at Kaifeng.<sup>123</sup> A related image is also found among the pictorial designs of the Wu Liang Shrine, which, as Wu Hung has demonstrated, was known in the eleventh century.<sup>124</sup> Exactly how this or a related image would have been read by a Song antiquarian is unclear—there are unresolved questions concerning the specifics of its iconography even today.<sup>125</sup> Nevertheless, it is certain that the scene is one that celebrates an auspicious occasion of universal proportions. The presence of the white tiger of the west and blue dragon of the east in the two *que* towers establishes the all-encompassing cosmic nature of the gathering, while a prancing winged immortal and the male *feng* and female *huang* phoenixes atop the roof certify its auspiciousness. Almost exactly one thousand years after this design was used to bless the tombs of the Han nobility, a similar scene is acted out at the main palace gate in the Northern Song capital of Kaifeng, where two cranes in particular, "imitating the blue *luan* that roosted atop the jeweled halls," rest their thousand-year-old forms on a roof's ridge that had been caressed by multi-hued rainbows. Was there a related pictorial model for the painter of "Auspicious Cranes"? Very likely, though in the heady atmosphere of Huizong's court it would simply have been said that the distant past is once more confirming the authenticity of Heaven's blessing.

### *Images of Reality*

The not so subtly disguised presumption of this study is that the painting lies. Of course, one may choose to believe the image as it is presented, to trust that magical clouds suddenly gathered about Xuande Gate the evening of February 26, 1112, soon to be followed by twenty cranes whose aerial dance took place just as it appears in the painting. One might even speculate that court artists were hurriedly called to make careful sketches, just as Yan Liben (d. A.D. 673), the "Painting Master," was rudely summoned to sketch the strange bird bobbing in Tang Taizong's pond.<sup>126</sup> The accumulated evidence, however, points to anything but the spontaneous event that Huizong's rather



ingenuous inscription suggests. This painting has been shown to belong to an elaborately structured program of self-indoctrination; thus, the burden of proof rests with those who insist on its veracity. Nevertheless, "Auspicious Cranes" does not, in my opinion, intentionally lie, and herein is found the true fascination of the painting. Somewhere between the purported event and the fashioning of the image, like so many other *ruiyi*ng, the arrival of the cranes became as certain a fact as the propriety of Huizong's music, the orthodoxy of his rites. The painting's style imbibes deeply of such confidence, and a new reality is born.

The genesis of this reality is presumption. Presumed reality might be construed as those higher truths that need not be seen to be understood. On occasion, however, they are made manifest in the phenomenal world, and when visible, they are distinctive enough in form to earn the designation *xiang*, which is roughly translatable as "Image" with a capital "I." The *xiang* image is basic, elemental, and powerful, like the original hexagrams discovered by Fuxi, the Ox-tamer of legendary times. *Xiang* is what is revealed when outer layers are stripped away. The mutability of clouds made them a particularly useful medium for revealing *xiang*, such as when the massive Imperial Tripod was moved to the palace in 1116: "Again there was the auspiciousness of flying cranes; the clouds were like the *xiang* of drawn hexagrams."<sup>127</sup> Cai Tao does not mean that the literal images of the hexagrams appeared, but rather the primitive pictographic forms of clouds from a time when painting and writing were thought to be undifferentiated. Nature, too, at its most auspicious and elemental, proves decidedly archaic.

Antiquity, as we have seen, was equated with orthodoxy. Thus, it is little wonder that so much attention was lavished on the *xiang* of the archaic ritual bronzes (Fig. 17). Li Gonglin, that most devoted of antiquarians, explains with absolute conviction:

The sages established the vessels and exalted the Images to carry forth the Dao and pass down their admonitions. The subtleties that could not be transmitted [orally or through writing] were lodged in the function of the vessels and [thus] bequeathed to later generations. Learned men have come to approach the vessels and seek out the Images, approach the Images and seek out the concept. The heart awakens and the eye sees for itself the purport of the ordering of things. One becomes enlightened with respect to the laws of the music and rites, and viewing day and night those secrets not explicated, one does not transgress virtue. . . . How could these merely be toys of dazzling material made to please the eye?<sup>128</sup>

Li Gonglin's and others' insistence that there was significance to the imagery of the vessels led to a number of interesting iconographical interpretations, interpretations that tend to inform us more of Song values than of ancient China. The *taotie* animal mask,

for example, was interpreted as an admonition against greed and gluttony; tigers represented righteousness (*yi*), the *wei* monkey intelligence. The *kui* dragon was the image of transformations that cannot be predicted.<sup>129</sup> "Look at the decor," says Dong You (act. 1126), "and you will know the concept."<sup>130</sup> But what one *knew* was founded on the cultural assumption that the age of high antiquity was thoroughly infused with ideal Confucian values. Incorporated into the sphere of presumed reality, the images of these vessels were made to mesh with the postulates of what was considered inviolable knowledge. The configuration of birds in "Auspicious Cranes" might be likened to the *xiang* of a vessel such as the Freer *ding*. From a Northern Song perspective, both are images of a higher truth. From our perspective, the creation of one and the interpretation of the other simply represent an intrinsically subjective way of viewing the world.

Huizong's use of painting to present images of what I have labeled presumed reality may in the context of Northern Song art seem idiosyncratic, but when viewed from a broad perspective, it in fact proves to be fundamentally traditional. One merely has to leap back over the great experiment with naturalism in painting, which more or less coincided with the tenth and eleventh centuries, to find an approach that is in perfect accordance with Huizong's art. The very first chapter of Zhang Yanyuan's *Lidai mingshua ji* (A.D. 847), which narrates the origins of painting, makes continuous reference to those first images (*xiang*) sent down by Heaven as auspicious responses and ill omens, and the role of painting and calligraphy, yet to be differentiated, in recording their fact:

While the systematization of Images had been established, it was still cursory. There was nothing by which their meanings could be transmitted, hence writing emerged; there was nothing by which their forms could be seen, hence painting came to be.<sup>131</sup>

In Zhang Yanyuan's time painting remained a system of representation defined in large part by a codification of brush-modes ("Gu, Lu, Zhang, and Wu").<sup>132</sup> It was a system that drew attention to itself, and the viewer thus remained aware of the role painting played as an idealized substitute for its subject. Developments in the way paintings were made over the two hundred years following Zhang Yanyuan, however, promoted a subtle change in the way they were understood. From an art of divine origins that describes things the way they should be, painting increasingly became an art founded on empirical study that describes images the way they are. Presumed reality and discovered reality—one describes the "principle" (*li*) that is known; the other uncovers the principle from an investigation of the nature of the object. Su Shi's well-known comment on Huang Quan's mistaken rendition of birds with

necks and legs both outstretched during flight well reflects this new attitude towards empirical study and naturalism.<sup>133</sup> As for pictorial evidence, while it would be a serious mistake to presume that any Song painting was as reliant on *plein air* observation as Su Shi's comment might suggest, Wen Tong's (1019–79) and Cui Bo's respective masterpieces, "Bamboo" (Fig. 18) and "Magpies and Hare" (dated A.D. 1061) (Fig. 19), at least capture the spirit of "discovered reality."

Northern Song naturalism, which has commonly been acclaimed as a classical norm in the history of Chinese painting, should in fact be recognized as something of a divergence. With the maturity of Su Shi's generation towards the end of the eleventh century, the divergence was suddenly readjusted. One indication of this rapid change is the contradictions inherent in Su Shi's writings on painting,<sup>134</sup> but even more telling is Su Shi's own painting (Fig. 20), which, despite professed allegiance to Wen Tong's school of painting, appears a world apart. Wen Tong's painting was intended to draw attention to the bamboo; Su Shi's painting only draws attention to itself. One might also consider the excoriating assessment of Cui Bo's work ("capable only of dirtying one's walls . . . suitable for teahouses and wineshops") by Mi Fu (1052–1107), one of the leading literati arbiters of taste.<sup>135</sup> It may at first seem paradoxical that a critic such as Mi Fu, who valued the real and the genuine as the highest criteria for art, would react so condescendingly towards Cui Bo, an artist whose work today appears to epitomize Northern Song realism. But what Mi Fu and Su Shi are saying is that a realistic style of painting by itself does not necessarily produce what is real. If Mi Fu were to critique "Magpies and Hare," I suspect that he would have mildly derided the staged quality of its scene.

What is certain is that its vulgarity (if one can be so presumptuous!) would have been attributed by Mi Fu to the character of Cui Bo himself. The Song literati, intent on bringing painting into the fold of their self-expressive activities, shifted attention from the objective to the subjective. The result was yet another form of reality, internalized within the individual and represented by *xiang* images of a decidedly personal nature, like Su Shi's old tree, rock, and bamboo. Wen Tong's painting can be said to bridge these two forms of reality, at least according to his admirers. His realism, in contrast to Cui Bo's, earns full praise because in his unique case no distinction is made between inner and outer reality: according to Su Shi, he is the bamboo.<sup>136</sup>

In certain respects, paintings such as "Auspicious Cranes," "The Five Colored Parakeet," and "Auspicious Dragon Rock" reflect a parallel development to the literati transformation of painting. They, too, represent a readjustment, though one that might be labeled regressive in the sense that it returns to earlier sensibilities. In its public role at the court, painting is infinitely more compelling when it defines universal as opposed to personal truths, and to give form to these universal truths the Huang Quan style appeared eminently well suited. What differentiates Huizong's scrolls from earlier paintings of a similar goal is that by utilizing the fine academic style derived from Huang Quan, they maintain the idiom of Song naturalism, thereby blurring the distinction between one form of reality and another, factualizing the fiction of what was presumed real. The dangers of this are all too clear in retrospect. Almost two thousand years earlier Lord Yi of Wei preferred cranes to people and lost his state. Huizong, sojourning in ancient times, would have done well to ruminate on his fate.



## Notes

Preliminary research for this study was presented in a paper entitled "The Auspicious Image, From Huizong to Gaozong and Mi Youren" in Professor John Hay's panel "Art and Environment at the Court of Huizong," The College Art Association, Boston, 1987.

1. In the collection of the Liaoning Provincial Museum. The painting is of ink and colors on silk and measures 51 x 138.2 cm. It is reproduced in color in *Yiyuan duoying*, no. 3, 1978, p. 2. Dong Yanming provides a brief introduction to the scroll on p. 29. See also Li Huishu, ed., *Song hua pian*, v. 2, in the series *Zhonghua wuqiannian wenwu jikan*, Taipei, 1985, v. 2, no. 2, pp. 136–38, and Fu Xinian, ed., *Liang Song huihua*, v. 1, in the series *Zhongguo maishu quanji*, Beijing, 1988, no. 47, p. 27. The painting is recorded in *Shiqu baoji xubian*, reprint ed., Taipei, 1971, p. 1915.
2. *Shangyuan* is the fifteenth day of the first month of the lunar calendar. It is also the second day of the Lantern Festival.
3. The term for "roof's ridge," *gule* in Chinese, is derived from Ban Gu's (A.D. 32–92) "Rhapsody on the Western Capital," where it is used to describe the Phoenix Watchtower of the Jade Gate. Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan* (photo reprint of Wen-yuange sikuquanshu ed., Taipei, 1983), fascicle 1, p. 16a. See David Knechtges, *Wen Xuan, or Selections of Refined Literature*, v. 1, Princeton, 1982, pp. 130–31. The allusion is significant for the gilt bronze phoenix set on a rotating axle (functioning like a weathervane) placed atop the roof ridge of the Han dynasty structure. As we will see, the legend of the phoenix that arrives in response to great virtue, usually perching atop the roof ridge, figures prominently in Huizong's iconography for the cranes. It is alluded to again in the second and fifth lines of Huizong's poem.
4. *Laiyi*, what I have very loosely translated as "arrive in favorable response," appears in the *Shu jing* to describe the expected arrival and stately deportment of the male and female phoenixes who come in response to the harmonious sounds of proper court music. See James Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, reprint ed., Taipei, 1983, v. 3, "The Shoo King or The Book of Historical Documents," pp. 88–89.
5. The three immortal isles are Penglai, Fangzhang, and Yingzhou, which, according to legend, were carried atop the heads of giant Ao tortoises in the Eastern Sea. These magical places are well described by Wolfgang Bauer in *China and the Search for Happiness*, tr. Michael Shaw, New York, 1976, pp. 96–98.
6. Cranes were believed to live well over one thousand years. This is discussed in more detail at a later point of this paper.
7. Refer to nn. 3 and 4. The *luan* is a subspecies of phoenix (some sources say its chick). Although it is usually described as mostly of red plumage, at least one source reports that, when the phoenix has many blue feathers, it is called *luan*.
8. Heaven's Pond refers to the Eastern Sea, where in 94 B.C. Han Wudi caught six red geese during an expedition. The geese were considered an auspicious omen. Ban Gu, *Han shu*, reprint ed., Beijing, 1970, f. 22, p. 1069.
9. In addition to "Auspicious Cranes," a conservative list of such paintings would include "The Five Colored Parakeet" (Boston Museum of Fine Arts), "Auspicious Dragon Rock" (Palace Museum, Beijing), "Gold-glittering Birds of Autumn" (collection unknown, reproduced in Xie Zhiliu, *Tang Wudai Song Yuan mingji*, Shanghai, 1957, pl. 35–39), "White Eagle" (collection unknown, reproduced in Xie Zhiliu, *Tang*, pl. 34), "Pheasant on a Flowering Hibiscus" (Palace Museum, Beijing), "Bubuls and Flowering Plum" (National Palace Museum, Taipei), "Dove on a Flowering Pear" (Setsu Gatodo collection, formerly Inoue collection), and "Finches on Bamboo" (Metropolitan Museum of Art, formerly John Crawford collection). For a more complete list of Huizong attributions and discussions of their documentation and style see Xu Bangda, "Song Huizong Zhao Ji qinbi hua yu daibi de kaobian" (Paintings from the hand of Huizong and the issue of his substitute painters), *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan*, no. 1, 1979, pp. 62–68, and Xu Bangda, *Gu shuhua weixue kaobian*, Jiangsu, 1984, pp. 217–33. See also Betty Tseng Yu-ho Ecke, "Emperor Hui Tsung, The Artist 1082–1135," Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1972, and Li Huishu, "Song yuanti huaniao hua zhi yanjiu" ("A study of the Song academy style of bird-and-flower painting"), M. A. thesis, National Taiwan University, 1984.
10. Cai Tao, the son of Huizong's prime minister Cai Jing (A.D. 1046–1126), mentions that all of the famous painters of the time entered into the service of the court and sacrificed their own personal artistic identities to become the emperor's *daibi*, or substitute painters. Cai Tao, *Tieweishan conglan*, Beijing, 1983, f. 6, p. 108. The fourteenth-century critic Tang Hou elaborated by directly claiming that Huizong's famed and numerically staggering set of paintings of rare and auspicious creatures entitled "Xuanhe ruilan ji" (discussed at a later point in this study) could not possibly have been painted by one as busy as an emperor. Rather, the paintings were done by academy painters "imitating Huizong's own work." Huizong would then add his seals and inscriptions. "As for Huizong's own paintings—it only takes one look to recognize them." Tang Hou, *Huajian*, in Liu Haisu, ed., *Huapin congshu*, Shanghai, 1982, p. 420. The ink-on-paper paintings include "Willows and Magpies" (Shanghai Museum; Xu Bangda considers the painting of geese and reeds attached to it spurious), "Pond in Autumn Evening" (National Palace Museum, Taipei), "Four Birds" (Cheng Chi collection), and "Fighting Magpies" (Nanjing Museum). Some of these paintings are discussed in Xu Bangda, "Song Huizong Zhao Ji qinbi hua yu daibi de kaobian" and *Gu shuhua weixue kaobian*. For reasons I do not fully understand, Xu Bangda includes the Metropolitan Museum's "Finches and Bamboo" in this second category of "clumsy paintings."
11. This same group of paintings was earlier rejected as incompatible with the more readily acceptable corpus of "fine style" Huizong attributions by Benjamin Rowland in his article "The Problem of Hui Tsung," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America*, v. 5, 1951, pp. 5–22.
12. For the respective styles of Xu Xi and Huang Quan see Guo Ruoxu's discussion entitled "On the Differences between the Styles of Huang and of Xu," in *Tuhua jianwen zhi*, *Huashi congshu* ed., Shanghai, 1982, pp. 12–13; Alexander Soper, *Kuo*



- Jo-Hsu's Experiences in Painting*, Washington, 1951, pp. 20–21. See also Deng Bai, *Xu Xi yu Huang Quan*, Beijing, 1958, and the biographies by Richard Barnhart in Herbert Franke, ed., *Sung Biographies*, Wiesbaden, 1976, "Painters," pp. 41–45, 50–55. A short discussion of Huizong and Huang Quan is provided in Benjamin Rowland, "Hui-tsung and Huang Ch'uan," *Artibus Asiae*, v. 17, no. 2, 1964, pp. 130–34.
13. Besides Tang Hou's assertion that a true Huizong painting is immediately recognizable as such (suggesting something significantly different from the academic-style paintings; see n. 10), the primary evidence is Deng Ji's 1193 colophon to Huizong's "Lotus, Heron and Startled Fish" (the present-day "Pond in Autumn Evening") recorded in Sun Feng's *Shuhua chao*. In it Deng claims that this ink painting, "done in the Jiangnan style," was personally painted by Huizong and presented to his great-grandfather Deng Xunwu (1055–1119). See Xu Bangda, *Cu shuhua weixue kaobian*, pp. 229–31.
  14. Benjamin Rowland, "The Problem of Hui Tsung," p. 20, with romanization changed to the Pinyin system.
  15. Xu Song, *Song huiyao jigao*, reprint ed., Taipei, 1964, v. 52, p. 2073. The five planets, called the five stars in Chinese and corresponding to the Five Agents, are Jupiter (wood), Mars (fire), Saturn (earth), Venus (metal), and Mercury (water). The *Song huiyao jigao* cites a passage from the *Han shu* confirming that this phenomenon signifies an era of great peace.
  16. Xu Song, *Song*, v. 52, p. 2073. There are reportings for almost every year that follows until 1120. See also Tuotuo, *Song shi*, Beijing, 1977, f. 20–22, pp. 379, 383, 385 (for a report of the ocean water clearing), 397, 399, and 405.
  17. Xu Song, *Song*, v. 52, pp. 2073–74. Sweet dew is reported as early as 1107 in the *Song shi* (f. 20, p. 377). It appears again around palace buildings on May 17, 1115, and a number of times thereafter. Xu Song, pp. 2075–76.
  18. Xu Song, *Song*, v. 52, p. 2074. Discoveries of auspicious grains became extremely common.
  19. Xu Song, *Song*, v. 52, p. 2074. The auspicious *lingzhi* fungus is also reported growing together with auspicious grain from a single stalk in Henan in 1106. *Song shi*, f. 20, p. 377. The degree of auspiciousness of the *lingzhi*, which became another commonly sighted phenomenon, was apparently dependent on the rarity and intensity of its color.
  20. Xu Song, *Song*, v. 52, p. 2074. See also *Song shi quan wen zizhi tongjian*, reprint ed., Taipei, 1969, f. 14, p. 896.
  21. Xu Song, *Song*, v. 52, p. 2075. *Daiqi* are the auras above the sun, *chengqi* are those below it. See also *Song shi quan wen xu zizhi tongjian*, f. 14, p. 898.
  22. This particular rock was found during construction of the Mingtang, or "Bright Hall" (naturally) in 1115. Xu Song, *Song*, v. 52, p. 2075.
  23. Xu Song, *Song*, v. 52, p. 2075.
  24. The gold nugget was reported on January 31, 1116. Xu Song, *Song*, v. 52, p. 2076. The clouds shaped like dragons and phoenixes appeared on March 3, 1115. Xu Song, p. 2075. The "phoenix" reported in the third lunar month of 1116, however, proved to be something much more common upon professional examination. *Song shi quan wen xu zizhi tongjian*, f. 14, p. 905. "Unicorns" were reported twice, once in the seventh lunar month of 1115 and once in the fourth month of 1122. *Song shi quan wen xu zizhi tongjian*, f. 14, pp. 902–3, and *Song shi*, f. 22, p. 408. The first of these strange beasts is described as being white, with the head of a cow, the body of a deer, long claws, and scales all over. Upon hearing of it, Huizong immediately issued a decree ordering that all such strange and rare beasts, if and when they appeared, were to be carefully nurtured.
  25. In certain instances auspicious phenomena do act as portents, as in the case of Liu Bang, who witnessed extraordinary cloudlike emanations at the Mang and Tang wastes prior to assuming the mantle of emperor. According to Wang Chong's *Lun heng*, "When the Mandate of Heaven is about to be launched, and a Sage-King is on the point of emerging, the material forces [qi], before and after the event, give proofs which will be radiantly manifest." Cited from Hsiao Kung-chuan, *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, tr. F. W. Mote, Princeton, 1979, v. 1, p. 594.
  26. Auspicious omens are referred to in "The Great Declaration" of Zhou Wuwang in the *Shu jing*. See Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, v. 3, p. 291. Confucius bemoaned the fact that in his day the phoenix would not come and the diagrams would not emerge from the river, both auspicious phenomena thought to have occurred in antiquity. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, v. 1, "Confucian Analects," p. 219.
  27. Hsiao Kung-chuan, *A History*, pp. 582–601, especially pp. 594–98. Correctly interpreting communication between the mundane and celestial worlds, of course, is one of the oldest cultural patterns of China, presumably even predating the oracle bone inscriptions of the Shang dynasty, which are the earliest concrete examples known today. Jack Dull refers to this body of thought as it developed in the Western Han as "Yin-yang Confucianism." See Jack Dull, "A Historical Introduction to the Apocryphal (Ch'an-wei) Texts of the Han Dynasty," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1966, p. 4. For an important earlier study see Hans Bielenstein, "An Interpretation of Portents in the Ts'ien Han Shu," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, v. 22, 1950, pp. 127–43. In both Bielenstein's and Dull's analysis of the historical development of the usage of *ruiyi* and related signs from Heaven during the Han dynasty, it is shown how early in the dynasty the negative cousins to *ruiyi*—anomalies and catastrophes (which do count as omens)—were used by high officials at the court to check the powers of the emperor. In time, however, Han emperors only encouraged favorable signs. As Homer Dubs has written, during Han Xuandi's reign (74–49 B.C.) "phoenixes, supernatural birds, sweet dew, dragons and other marvels appeared. Upon each such report, Emperor Xuan distributed favors—amnesties, noble ranks, oxen and wine, silk." *The History of the Former Han Dynasty*, reprint ed., American Council of Learned Societies, 1954, v. 2, p. 190. This important change in the court's dealing with heavenly signs points to two common patterns for later times: emperors could manipulate *ruiyi* to bolster their claims to political legitimacy, and they could actively encourage their discovery

- with material rewards. Thus, Emperor Wang Mang of the short-lived Xin dynasty (A.D. 8–23), in his first year on the throne, promulgated a composition in forty-two fascicles entitled “The Mandate of Heaven Made Known by Tallies” that described the various portents foretelling the rise of the new dynasty, justifying Wang’s usurpation of the throne, and legitimizing his rule. His officials, seeing how influential omens were, and how those who submitted them to the throne were sometimes enfeoffed as marquises, all quickly rushed to join the crowd. Dull, pp. 160–65; Dubs, v. 3, pp. 288–307.
28. Eduard Chavannes in *Mission Archeologique dans la Chine Septentrionale*, 2 v., Paris, 1909, and Bertold Laufer in *Chinese Grave Sculptures of the Han Period*, New York, 1911, published and commented upon Han *xian* (auspicious) imagery early in this century. More recent studies include Martin Powers, “Hybrid Omens and Public Issues in Early Imperial China,” *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, no. 55, 1983, pp. 1–55; Wu Hung, “A Sanpan Shan Chariot Ornament and the Xiangrui Design in Western Han Art,” *Archives of Asian Art*, no. 37, 1984, pp. 38–59; and Wu Hung, *The Wuliang Shrine—The Ideology of Early Chinese Pictorial Art*, Stanford, 1989, especially ch. 3, “The Ceiling: Heavenly Omens,” pp. 73–107. For a different interpretation of the imagery on the chariot ornament and a mild challenge to Wu Hung’s argument that the imagery is purely of an auspicious nature, see my own “Wild Beasts and Winged Immortals, Early Portrayals of Landscape in Chinese Art,” *National Palace Museum Bulletin*, v. 20, no. 2, May–June 1985, p. 3.
  29. Sun Rouzhi’s *Ruiying tu* is found in Ma Guohan’s *Yuhan shanfang ji yishu*, reprint ed., Taipei, 1967, v. 5, pp. 2835–48. For an annotated catalogue of the auspicious images found in the pictorial program at the Wuliangci see Wu Hung, *The Wuliang Shrine*, pp. 234–44.
  30. Xu Song, *Song*, v. 52, p. 2073.
  31. Xu Song, *Song*, v. 52, p. 2074.
  32. “Auspicious Grain” is an impressively large and colorful painting, measuring 190.2 x 67.9 cm. Although it has been labeled a Yuan dynasty painting by the connoisseurs of Qianlong’s court, it is of undetermined date. *Shiqu baoji xubian*, p. 1008.
  33. Xu Song, *Song*, v. 52, p. 2075. *Song shi quanwen xu zizhi tongjian*, f. 14, p. 903.
  34. Cai Jing’s participation is constantly referred to in the *Song huiyao*. Wang Anzhong’s collected works is *Chuliao ji*, reprint ed., Taipei, 1971. In his official biography included in the *Song shi* is found the following comment: “During the Zhenghe period, all under Heaven competed in the telling of *ruiying*. The court officials all submitted congratulatory memorials, and when Huizong saw [Wang Anzhong’s] compositions, he remarked upon his extraordinary talent.” Tuotuo, *Song shi*, f. 352, p. 11124. For an unfavorable view of Wang as a sycophant to the eunuch Liang Shicheng see Cai Tao, *Tieweishan congkan*, f. 6, pp. 110–11.
  35. See n. 27. For Tang Taizong’s use of portents refer to Howard J. Weschler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk: Ritual and Symbol in the Legitimation of the T’ang Dynasty*, New Haven, 1985, especially the chapter “Plum Trees and Flood Waters: The Management and Manipulation of Portents,” pp. 55–77.
  36. See Fang Hao, *Song shi*, Taipei, 1979, pp. 86–88, 138–39.
  37. Cai Tao, *Tieweishan congkan*, f. 2, pp. 32–33.
  38. Cai Tao, *Tieweishan congkan*, f. 1, p. 12.
  39. According to the *Song shi quanwen xu zizhi tongjian*, f. 14, p. 897, the auspicious toad offered to the court in 1112 was presented by an official named Li Hui. Huizong questioned how a plant could grow from an animal and ordered the creature placed in water overnight. Some hidden bamboo nails loosened and Li Hui’s *ruiying* was exposed as a fraud. For his deception he was demoted to a minor post for three years. See also Li Hui’s biography in the *Song shi*, f. 355, pp. 11191–92, and the official document announcing Li’s punishment in Liu Anshang, *Liu Jishi ji*, reprint ed., Taipei, 1971, f. 2, p. 11b.
  40. Wang Anzhong, *Chuliao ji*, f. 5, pp. 18b–19a. The toad that Wang Anzhong’s memorial describes was from Hezhong, modern-day Yongqixian in Shanxi Province. The one presented in 1112 came from Xin’anxian in Henan. Actually, there may have been three such toads; despite the suggestion in the commentary to *Song shi quanwen xu zizhi tongjian* that the toad of 1112 was presented by Li Hui, other sources make it clear that Li was serving in Yongxing Commandery (Chang’an, Shaanxi) when his fraud was revealed.
  41. “For appreciating the fragrance and perfume of great deeds the setting up of reds and blues may be compared to the writing of a panegyric: for making things widely known nothing is greater than speech, but for preserving the appearance [of these things] there is nothing better than painting.” Zhang Yanyuan citing Lu Ji (261–303) in his *Lidai minghua ji*, f. 1, p. 2. Translation by William Reynolds Beal Acker, *Some T’ang and Pre-T’ang Texts on Chinese Painting*, Leiden, 1954, p. 73.
  42. Appearance of the auspicious red crow announces the presence of a ruler who values the people and does not harbor imperialist designs. Sun Rouzhi, *Ruiying tu*, p. 2843.
  43. An unusual breed of bird (albino?) with white plumage and red beak. It is occasionally mentioned in Tang dynasty texts, where it is described as an auspicious bird whose appearance signals the relief of anxieties. It is also found in Sun Rouzhi’s *Ruiying tu*, p. 2843.
  44. The beast of “pure numinosity,” long-tailed and possessing a single antler. Sun Rouzhi, *Ruiying tu*, p. 2845.
  45. Trees and plants whose trunks or stems are split, or whose branches are intertwined with those of another (like a tree with two trunks) are deemed particularly auspicious. See the entry on *mukianli* in Sun Rouzhi’s *Ruiying tu*, p. 2841, and Wu Hung, *The Wuliang Shrine*, p. 240. Such plants are mentioned a number of times in this passage.
  46. Yueshang is the region of present-day southern Vietnam. The white pheasant of Yueshang was a celebrated offering of



tribute to the court in early times.

47. A divine bird of the phoenix genus. Some sources describe it as like a wild duck with red eyes. Others simply call it a small phoenix.
48. Deng Chun, *Hua ji, Huashi congshu* ed., Shanghai, 1982, f. 1, p. 2. See also Ecke, "Emperor Hui-Tsung the Artist: 1082–1135," p. 99.
49. See n. 10.
50. The argument has been put forth most strongly by Xu Bangda in his "Song Huizong Zhao Ji qinbi hua yu daibi de kaobian" and *Gu shuhua weixue kaobian*. It has been repeated since in a number of places, including the notes to the reproductions of "Auspicious Cranes" and "Auspicious Dragon Rock" in Fu Xinian, ed., *Liang Song huihua (shang)*. See also Li Huishu, "Song yuanti huaniao hua zhi yanjiu," p. 123.
51. "The Five Colored Parakeet" measures 53.3 x 125.1 cm., "Auspicious Dragon Rock" 54 x 130 cm., and "Auspicious Cranes" 51 x 138.2 cm. The slight discrepancies, particularly in length, are probably due to trimming that took place when the paintings were remounted. The format of Huizong's inscription, the signatures, ciphers, and seals (*Xuanhedian bao*) all match. The only significant difference among the three scrolls is that the inscription on "The Five Colored Parakeet" is to the right rather than the left of the painting. This, again, however, is probably due to a later remounting. Both "The Five Colored Parakeet" and "Auspicious Dragon Rock" possess the *Tianli zhi bao* seal of the fourteenth century, suggesting that these two paintings were together at this time. "The Five Colored Parakeet" also possesses the seals of Dai Mingshuo (act. ca. 1660) and Song Luo (1634–1713), as well as those of the Qing imperial court. It is recorded in *Shiqu baoji chubian*, reprint ed., Taipei, 1971, p. 770. See Tomita Kojiro, "The Five Colored Parakeet by Hui Tsung (1082–1135)," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts*, v. 31, 1933, pp. 75–79. "Auspicious Dragon Rock" possesses the seals of Prince Zhu Gang (d. 1398) and Xiang Dushou (*jinsi* 1562), elder brother of Xiang Yuanbian. It is recorded in Wu Rongguang's *Xinchou xiaoxia lu*, reprint ed., Taipei, 1971. "Auspicious Cranes" has a long inscription and poem attached by the fourteenth-century monk Laifu (1319–91), as well as his seals. It is recorded in *Shiqu baoji xubian*, p. 1915.
52. Fangzhou is the name of one of the immortal isles of the Eastern Sea. An alternate translation for *shengying* is "surpassing Ying," in which case Ying would also refer to one of the immortal isles, Yingzhou. It is possible that the Shengying of Huizong's inscription refers to a re-creation of one of the immortal isles in a body of water, rather than the water itself.
53. A recent viewing of this scroll revealed some more plants, apparently narcissi, growing from a crevice at the lower right center of the rock.
54. Lingbiao is a generic term that refers to the regions beyond the five ranges, i. e., China proper. Here it specifically refers to the far south and southwest, roughly corresponding to modern-day Guangdong and Guangxi provinces. For more on the nomenclature, see Edward Schafer, *The Vermilion Bird*, Berkeley, 1967, pp. 5–7.
55. Tomita Kojiro's short article, "The Five Colored Parakeet by Hui Tsung (1082–1135)," includes a full translation of Huizong's inscription and poem. Talking parrots and parakeets are described by Cai Tao in *Tieweishan congkan*, f. 6, pp. 111–12. Those interested in pursuing this colorful subject further would do well to begin with Edward Schafer's "Parrots in Medieval China," published in *Studia Serica Bernhard Karlgren Dedicata—Sinological Studies Dedicated to Bernhard Karlgren on his Seventieth Birthday, October 5, 1959*, Copenhagen, 1959, pp. 271–82. See also Schafer, *The Vermilion Bird*, especially pp. 239–40.
56. On "The Five Colored Parakeet": "He has his own particular manner. Casually watching him [his appearance] is thoroughly superior to [what] a picture [can capture]. Thus, I have composed this poem." On "Auspicious Dragon Rock": "His force is bounding and roiling, like that of a serpentine dragon emerging to give form to an auspicious response. Its rare comportment and ingenious manners cannot be adequately described with even the most exhaustive and marvelous of words. I have thus personally painted [its image on] this piece of silk and added this poem to record it." The last lines of Huizong's poem on the rock also express the emperor's sense of inadequacy concerning his descriptive powers: "The dark mists that it eternally carries I suspect are toying with its whiskers, / Each time it mounts the evening rains I fear it will soar into the empyrean. / For this reason I rely on my colored brush to personally sketch [its likeness], / But its deep merit, fused and assembled, is not easily exhausted."
57. Xu Song, *Song*, v. 52, pp. 2074–76.
58. "When the [heraldic] designs on pennants were made clear, then rules [of conduct] and regulations [of etiquette] were clarified, and the institutions of the [different] states were fully observed." Zhang Yanyuan, *Lidai minghua ji*, f. 1, p. 2. Translation by Acker, *Some T'ang*, p. 71.
59. Cai Tao, *Tieweishan congkan*, f. 2, pp. 27–28.
60. Lawrence Walkinshaw, *Cranes of the World*, New York, 1973, especially pp. 1–9, 144–61.
61. According to legend, the *Xiang he jing* was given by Lord Fouqiu (sometimes called Li Fouqiu, active, according to one source, during the reign of Zhou Lingwang [r. 571–545 B.C.]) to Wang Ziqiao, a Zhou prince who is said to have ascended to Heaven riding a crane (Wang Ziqiao later became an important Daoist figure). This took place on sacred Mount Song. Wang Ziqiao, in turn, passed the text on to Cui Wenzhi. It was stored in a cave on Mount Song, where it was later recovered by the Eight Lords of Huainan and consequently transmitted among men. See Edward Schafer, "The Cranes of Mao Shan," in *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques*, v. 21, ed. Michel Strickmann, "Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R. A. Stein," Bruxelles, 1983, pp. 372–93, and especially nn. 5 and 7 for information on Wang Ziqiao and the *Xiang he jing*. The text was known only from fragments in the eleventh century when Wang Anshi reconstructed it (in A.D. 1077). It remains extremely brief. Various versions of the *Xiang he jing* are known today, with minor differences among them. I have utilized the one recorded in *Shuo fu*, reprint ed., Shanghai, 1988, p. 4933, in conjunction with the version that appears in the Shan commentary to Bao Zhao's "Wu he fu" in Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, f. 14, pp. 9b–13a. It has been speculated that the actual date of the *Xiang he jing* is the third or fourth century. See Schafer, "The Cranes of Mao Shan," n. 7, who cites Beth

- Upton's paper, "The Medieval Animal Book in China and the West: A Comparative Study of Two Thirteenth Century Works," *Phi Theta Papers*, v. 14, 1977, p. 44.
62. This story is recorded in the *Zuo juan*. See Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, v. 5 [The Ch'un Ts'ew with the Tso Chuen], p. 129. The people of Wei were so resentful of the special attention accorded these birds that they refused to fight when Wei was invaded by the Di tribes. "Employ the cranes," they said.
  63. See in particular Su Shi's comical poem "He tan" ("A sigh [of admiration] for the crane"), ed. Wang Wen'gao, *Su Shi shi ji*, reprint ed., Beijing, 1982, f. 37, p. 2003, and his prose piece "Fangheting ji" ("Record of the Pavilion for Releasing the Cranes"), Su Shi, *Jingjin Dongpo wen ji shilue*, reprint ed., Beijing, 1957, f. 51, pp. 839–40. For information on Lin Bu see Maggie Bickford, *Bones of Jade, Soul of Ice: The Flowering Plum in Chinese Art*, New Haven, 1985, pp. 22–26.
  64. *Xuanhe hua pu*, *Huashi congshu* ed., Shanghai, 1982, f. 15, pp. 164–65. Mi Fu was especially fond of Xue Ji. Note the poem that he wrote for one of Xue's paintings of cranes in the preface to his *Hua shi*, in Liu Haisu, *Huapin congshu*, Shanghai, 1982, p. 187.
  65. *Shina nanga taisai*, Tokyo, n. d., v. 6, pl. 15–17. The scroll is briefly discussed by Benjamin Rowland in "Hui Tsung and Huang Ch'uan." The original composition by Huang Quan is said to have been a mural painting done in the Five Dynasties state of Shu (Sichuan) in 944. Guo Ruoxu, *Tuhua jianwen zhi*, f. 5, p. 69; Soper, *Experiences in Painting*, p. 75. An album leaf attributed to Huizong depicting one of the six cranes accompanied by a poem is in the collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei. This, however, is a much later work.
  66. Deng Chun, *Hua ji*, f. 1, p. 1. The painting was entitled "Releasing the Cranes in the Bamboo Villa."
  67. Walkinshaw, *Cranes of the World*, especially pp. 157–58.
  68. Sun Rouzhi, *Ruiying tu*, p. 2842.
  69. Translation by W. K. Liao with slight modifications, *The Complete Works of Han Fei Tzu*, London, 1939, v. 1, p. 76.
  70. Published in Shōsōin Office ed., *Shōsōin no kinkō*, Tokyo, 1976, pl. 19.
  71. "Ti Li Boshi hua Zhao Jingren qinhe tu er shou," ed. Wang Wen'gao, *Su Shi shiji*, f. 30, pp. 1606–7.
  72. Sun Rouzhi, *Ruiying tu*, p. 2842.
  73. *Shang shu zhonghou*, in *Han Wei yishu chao*, reprint ed., Taipei, 1968, p. 7b.
  74. See n. 4.
  75. Sun Rouzhi, *Ruiying tu*, p. 2842. A phoenix prancing to the sounds being played on a pan-pipe appears opposite the dancing crane on the Tang mirror illustrated in Fig. 9, and for a scene that reminds us just how much the associations of these various sacred birds overlap see the Dengxian tile depicting Lord Fouqiu and Wang Ziqiao (of *Xiang he jing* fame) with a dancing phoenix. Annette Juliano, *Teng-hsien: An Important Six Dynasties Tomb*, Ascona, 1980, figs. 68, 69.
  76. The *Song huiyao jigao* records the following occasions: the eighth (lunar) month, 1099; the eleventh month, 1112; the tenth month, 1113; the ninth month, 1118; the intercalary ninth month, 1118; twice during the tenth month, 1118; and the tenth month, 1120. Xu Song, v. 52, pp. 2073–76. Li You's *Song chao shishi*, Taipei, 1958, f. 14, pp. 221–22, mentions two other occasions: the ninth month of 1105 and the winter of 1106, and Cai Tao's *Tieweishan conglan*, f. 1, pp. 11–12, records two consecutive days in the first month of 1104. A number of congratulatory memorials written by Wang Anzhong also describe the arrival of the cranes. None of these is dated, though at least two occurrences can be tallied with descriptions from other sources. Wang Anzhong, *Chuliao ji*, f. 5, pp. 13a, 15a, 16a, and 16b–17a. The first occasion listed above is something of an exception, as it occurred shortly before Huizong's accession and took place at the Daoist establishment on Maoshan in Jiangsu (all of the others took place in Kaifeng). I include it here because it is mentioned as one of the important occasions that led to the making of the cranes pennant in 1117.
  77. A good example is the grand banquet held at the Hall of Assembled Luminaries (Jiyinding) on November 4, 1120, when thousands of cranes are reported to have appeared in the sky. Xu Song, *Song*, v. 52, p. 2076. The prescribed rituals of drinking, music, and dancing practiced during this biannual grand feast (spring and autumn) are well described in Tuotuo, *Song shi*, f. 113, pp. 2688–91.
  78. Kenneth J. DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two—Music and the Concept of Art in Early China*, Ann Arbor, 1982, especially pp. 29–39.
  79. This concept is best described in Xunzi: "Music enters deeply into men and transforms them rapidly. Therefore, the former kings were careful to give it the proper form. When music is moderate and tranquil, the people become harmonious and shun excess. When music is stern and majestic, the people become well behaved and shun disorder. . . . The fame of the state will become known abroad, its glory will shine forth greatly, and all people within the four seas will long to become its subjects. Then at last a true king may be said to have arisen. But if music is seductive and depraved, then the people will become abandoned and mean-mannered. Those who are abandoned will fall into disorder; those who are mean-mannered will fall to quarreling. . . . Hence, the turn away from the proper rites and music and to allow evil music to spread is the source of danger and disgrace." Translation by Burton Watson, *Hsun-tzu: Basic Writings*, New York, 1964, pp. 114–15.
  80. A detailed account of the various classifications of sound and the development of physical acoustics, as well as the search for accuracy in tuning, is provided in Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Cambridge, 1962, v. 4, pt. 1, pp. 126–228. For a good introduction to the system of twelve pitches used in Chinese music and in particular the *huang-zhong*, "yellow bell" pitch, that was the basis for mathematically generating the other eleven see DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two*, pp. 43–54. DeWoskin also recounts the myth found in *Lushi chunqiu* of the Yellow Emperor ordering his minister Ling Lun to establish the pitch standards. Ling Lun did so by cutting a section of bamboo between two nodes. The harmonious sound that resulted by blowing into this pipe of particular length was taken to be the *gong* tone (the first in the Chinese sequence of five sounds) at the yellow bell pitch



- level. DeWoskin, pp. 59–60.
81. From Liu Bing's "Record of the Dasheng Music," recorded in Li You, *Song chao shishi*, reprint ed., Taipei, 1958, f. 14, pp. 220–21. Music thus joins prose writing, poetry, and calligraphy as art forms that plunged to new depths of lowliness during the Five Dynasties Period, at least in the minds of the Northern Song literati.
  82. Xu Song, *Song*, v. 8, pp. 341–42. Tuotuo, *Songshi*, f. 81, p. 2998. See also the article by Ling Jingyan, "Song Wei Hanjin yue yu Dashengfu" ("The music of Wei Hanjin of Song and the Dashengfu"), *Yenching Journal of Chinese Studies*, v. 28, December 1940, pp. 105–32.
  83. James Watt, who has devoted some study to Huizong's music and to whom I am grateful for sharing some small measure of his broad knowledge, assures me that Wei's methods are totally absurd. The pentatonic scale of the *wuyin*, or five tones, should be fixed by mathematical proportions, not by the lengths of Huizong's or anyone else's fingers. Liu Bing's account, included in Li You's *Song chao shishi*, f. 14, p. 221, mentions nothing of the correspondence between individual fingers and tones; moreover, it suggests that the length of measure used to determine the *huangzhong* pitch was simply the three added sections of Huizong's middle finger multiplied by three.
  84. Both sets of multiples are mentioned in the *Song chao shishi*, though their exact significance is not specified. An interesting footnote to this question of finger length is provided by the *Song shi*, f. 81, pp. 2998–99, where it is recorded that some thirteen years later (1118) Huizong had a nightmare in which a man said to him, "The music has been completed, but still the phoenix does not come. It was not the emperor's finger!" Huizong realized that his finger length had been inaccurately measured due to the necessity of keeping it concealed from an "outsider" (i. e., Wei Hanjin).
  85. From Liu Bing's account. Li You, *Song chao shishi*, f. 14, p. 221.
  86. Abbreviated historical records frequently mention Wei Hanjin's forging of the Nine Tripods and his settling of the proper pitches in a single breath, and such lines as "The body is used as measurement and the tripods are cast to give rise to the tones" (from a Huizong decree of the eighth month, 1105, Li You, *Song chao shishi*, f. 14, p. 222) would seem to suggest some technological link between the casting of the tripods and the length of the measure used for the pitches. On the other hand, the fact that the tripods were cast approximately a year before Huizong's fingers were measured (if we trust the often contradictory dates of the historical records) obviously dampens this idea. James Watt has suggested that a large project such as the casting of the Nine Tripods would have provided important firsthand experience in preparation for the forging of the bells that followed the settling of the pitches.
  87. "Jiucheng" refers to the nine passages of Yu's music to which the phoenixes were attracted. See n. 4. Jiuchenggong was also the name of a well-known imperial retreat restored by Taizong early in the Tang dynasty, but given the association between the tripods and the court music, the story from the *Shang shu* must be the primary allusion underlying the name of Huizong's palace.
  88. Cai Tao, *Tieweishan congkan*, f. 1, pp. 11–12. Cai continues with an account of how one of the nine tripods, the *bao ding*, began to leak water during Huizong's ceremony, despite the fact that the metal was several inches thick and without any cracks. Liu Bing offered the explanation that the dirt and water held by the *bao ding* did not really come from the northern territories of You and Yan as would have been proper (this was the general region that the *bao ding* was supposed to represent), but from the border area still under Song control. At the time this was deemed a suitable explanation, though Cai then adds the rueful comment that in the end it was the recovery of these northern territories that led to the demise of the Northern Song. He goes on to describe the reappearance of the cranes in 1116 when the tripods were moved to new quarters within the imperial precincts. Specifically, this occurred during the moving of the "Imperial Tripod," *di nai*, which, though extremely large, seemed remarkably easy to transport.
  89. Tuotuo, *Song shi*, f. 20, p. 375.
  90. From Huizong's "Record of the Dasheng Music," in Li You, *Song chao shishi*, f. 14, p. 224. See also Tuotuo, *Song shi*, f. 129, p. 3001.
  91. Li You, *Song chao shishi*, f. 14, p. 224.
  92. Cai Tao, *Tieweishan congkan*, f. 1, p. 17.
  93. Hashima Kazuhiko, "Jogen kantō ni mieru Sōdai no toshi fuzoku" ("Customs of the capital during the Song dynasty as seen in the viewing of lanterns during the Shangyuan festival"), *Ajia shi kenkyū*, v. 9, 1985, pp. 16–31. Patricia Angela Sieber, "Highlighting Competing Discourses: The Lantern Festival in the Northern and Southern Song Dynasties," M. A. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1988. I am particularly indebted to Sieber for the wealth of information provided in her fine paper.
  94. The color and pageantry of the Lantern Festival during the late years of the Northern Song are particularly well described in Meng Yuanlao's *Dongjing menghua lu*, reprint ed., Taipei, 1980, f. 6, pp. 34–38. The Lantern Festival originally lasted only three nights, but according to Cai Tao, *Tieweishan congkan*, f. 1, p. 17, it was expanded to five by Emperor Song Taizu in A.D. 967. See Sieber, "Competing Discourses," pp. 10–13, for a detailed discussion.
  95. Meng Yuanlao, *Dongjing menghua lu*, f. 1, p. 9. See also Wu Tao, *Bai Song ducheng Dongjing*, Henan, 1984, p. 3.
  96. Meng Yuanlao, *Dongjing menghua lu*, f. 6, p. 34.
  97. Cai Tao, *Tieweishan congkan*, f. 1, p. 17. The custom of setting the plaque began in 1107, the first year of the Daguan reign, when Song Qiaonian (1047–1113) was magistrate of Kaifeng. It was repeated every year until the fall of the Northern Song. See also Sieber, "Competing Discourses," pp. 35–36.
  98. Meng Yuanlao, *Dongjing menghua lu*, f. 6, p. 35.
  99. From a *ci* poem by Huizong entitled "Chun jie," to the tune "Sheng sheng man." Translation by Ecke, "Emperor Hui Tsung the Artist: 1082–1136," p. 40.

100. There is the additional evidence of the *yuan he* cranes that arrived in two groups of eight to hear Master Kuang's performance of the *qin*. See n. 69.
101. Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, f. 14, pp. 9b–13a. I would like to acknowledge my great appreciation to Professor Hans Frankel of Yale University for leading me to and through Erwin von Zach's German translation of Zhao Bao's *fu* in Erwin von Zach, *Die Chinesische Anthologie*, ed. Ilse Martin Fang and James Hightower, Cambridge, 1958, pp. 208–10.
102. Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, f. 14, p. 11b.
103. By a gentleman named Sieber in 1932, recorded in Walkinshaw, *Cranes of the World*, p. 22.
104. Xiao Tong, *Wen xuan*, f. 14, p. 11b.
105. Tuotuo, *Song shi*, f. 129, p. 3027.
106. From Liu Bing's "Discussion of the Dasheng Music," Li You, *Song chao shishi*, f. 14, p. 222.
107. Cited from the "Tian xia" chapter of *Zhuangzi*, reprint ed., Taipei, 1968, f. 10, p. 570. Dazhang can be translated as "The Great Illumination." Dashao, which means "The Great Continuation," was so named because of Shun's perceived role as a follower of Yao.
108. This is from a proclamation issued by Huizong in the eighth month of 1105. Li You, *Song chao shishi*, f. 14, p. 222.
109. Li You, *Song chao shishi*, f. 14, p. 223.
110. Original records of the bells are found in Huizong's sponsored catalogue of objects from antiquity, *Xuanhe bogu tuhu*, reprint ed., Taipei, 1969, f. 22, where it is explicitly stated that the identity of Song Gongcheng is not known. The bells are also mentioned in Dong You's *Guangchuan shu ba*, photo-reprint of the Wenyuange siku quanshu ed., Taipei, 1983, f. 3, pp. 4b–7a. In more recent times the bells have been the subject of studies by Richard Rudolph and Chen Mengjia: Richard Rudolph, "Dynastic Booty: An Altered Chinese Bronze," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, v. 11, 1948, pp. 174–83; Chen Mengjia, "Song Dasheng bianzhong kaoshu" ("A study of the Song Dasheng bells"), *Wenwu*, no. 2, 1964, pp. 51–53. See as well Li Wenxin, "Shangjing kuan Dasheng nanlu bianzhong," *Wenwu*, no. 5, 1963, pp. 42–44. They were also the subject of a paper presented by James Watt at the College Art Association in Boston, 1987. A small portion of Watt's findings are found in his recent catalogue *Chinese Jades from the Collection of the Seattle Art Museum*, Seattle, 1990.
111. From Jia Gongyan's commentary to the *Zhou li*, photo-reprint of Wenyuange siku quanshu ed., Taipei, 1983, f. 22, p. 6b.
112. According to Chen Mengjia, the fifth character of the inscription, read *jing* (a variant of the character *jing*, meaning "stalk") in the early twelfth century, is now understood as *ge* (a variant for the character *ge*, meaning "song"). Chen Mengjia, "Song Dasheng," p. 51.
113. See n. 110. According to Chen Mengjia, "Song Dasheng," p. 52, surviving bells are now found in the Royal Ontario Museum (1), the Liaoning Provincial Museum (1), the Palace Museum in Beijing (3), and a Japanese collection (1).
114. There is an extensive description of the discovery of this jade in Cai Tao, *Tieweishan congfan*, f. 1, pp. 9–11. See also Sun Rouzhi, *Ruiying tu*, p. 2839.
115. "[Huizong] wished to establish and codify the ways of the beginnings of antiquity. Distantly he chased after the thoughts of Yao and Shun, and for this reason [ancient ritual vessels] were greatly honored and prized." Cai Tao, *Tieweishan congfan*, f. 4, p. 79. Refer to E. H. Kracke, Jr., "Sung K'ai-feng: Pragmatic Metropolis and Formalistic Capital," in *Crisis and Prosperity in Sung China*, ed. John Winthrop Haeger, Phoenix, 1975, pp. 49–77, for some general comments on aspects of the Northern Sung court's expression of antique ideals through formalistic means.
116. Yang Zhongliang, *Zizhi tongjian changbian jishi benmo*, reprint ed., Taipei, 1968, f. 134, pp. 1a–1b.
117. From the tomb inscription to Zhai Ruwen, in Zhai Ruwen, *Zhonghui ji*, reprint ed., Taipei, 1971, addendum, p. 5a. This occurrence is also noted in the *Xuanhe yishi*. See William O. Hennessey, *Proclaiming Harmony*, Ann Arbor, 1981, p. 29.
118. Zhai Ruwen, *Zhonghui ji*, addendum, pp. 6a–b.
119. Described in Cai Tao, *Tieweishan congfan*, f. 4, p. 80. There is a record of this taking place in the tenth month, 1113. Tuotuo, *Song shi*, f. 21, p. 392. See also Wang Anzhong's poem, "Jin he yuzhi xing Taixue Bishusheng shi," written on the occasion of an imperial tour of the various treasures kept in the Palace Library, including ancient bronzes. Wang Anzhong, *Chuliao ji*, f. 1, pp. 17b–18a.
120. Cai Tao, *Tieweishan congfan*, f. 4, pp. 79–80. And this did not count Qin and Han pieces, which were kept only if deemed particularly unusual.
121. Ye Mengde, *Bishu luhua*, reprint ed., ed. Ye Tingguan, 1845, xia, pp. 15b–16a.
122. See Osvald Siren, *Kinas Konst under tre Artusen*, Stockholm, 1942, v. 1, p. 289; Alan Priest, "Chinese Sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art," 1944, cat. no. 5; Chow Fong, "Chinese Buddhist Sculpture," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, n.s., v. 23, May 1965, pt. 1, pp. 302, 305.
123. Prominent discoveries have been made in particular at Nanyang, Henan province, and near Xuzhou, in northern Jiangsu. See "Jiangsu Tongshan Dong Han mu qingli jianbao" ("Preliminary report on the Eastern Han tombs found at Tongshan, Jiangsu"), *Kaogu tongxun*, no. 4, 1957; "Jiangsu Xuzhou Tongshan wu zuo Han mu qingli jianbao" ("Preliminary report on the five Eastern Han tombs found at Tongshan, Xuzhou, Jiangsu"), *Kaogu*, no. 10, 1964; "Jiangsu Xuzhou Shilipu Han huaxiang shi mu" ("The Han tombs with stone carvings found at Shilipu, Xuzhou, Jiangsu"), *Kaogu*, no. 2, 1966; "Jiangsu Pixian Baishan Guzi liang zuo Dong Han huaxiang shi mu" ("Two Eastern Han tombs with stone carvings found at Baishan, Pixian, Jiangsu"), *Wenwu*, no. 5, 1985; "Nanyang Han huaxiang shi gaishu" ("Overview of the Han stone carvings of Nanyang"), *Wenwu*, no. 6, 1973.



124. The carvings are first mentioned in Zhao Mingcheng's *jinshi lu* of 1117, though the inscriptions on two tablets of the shrine are recorded in Ouyang Xiu's *jiu lu* of half a century earlier. Wu Hung, *The Wu Liang Shrine*, pp. 3–4.
125. Various interpretations of the related “homage scene” are presented in Wu Hung's *The Wu Liang Shrine*, pp. 193–213. Wu Hung's conclusion that the scene represents homage being paid to the emperor accords extremely well with my argument for the relationship of such images to “Auspicious Cranes,” which in a manner of speaking is a scene of homage being paid to Huizong by the cranes and the residents of the capital during the Lantern Festival. Of course, this would only be significant if such Han images were understood the same way in the Song dynasty.
126. Zhang Yanyuan, *Lidai minghua ji*, f. 9, pp. 104–5.
127. Cai Tao, *Tieweishan congkan*, f. 1, p. 12.
128. Cited from Zhai Qianian, *Zhou shi*, in *Shoushange congshu*, ed. Qian Xizuo, Shanghai, 1862, v. 74, pp. 16a–b.
129. For the *taotie*, *wei* monkey, and *kui* dragon see *Xuanhe bogu tulu*, f. 1, pp. 3a–b. For the tiger's association with righteousness see f. 1, pp. 18a–b. See also Dong You, *Guangchuan shuba*, f. 1, p. 1b, and Ye Guoliang, “Song dai jinshixue yanjiu” (“Researches on *jinshi* studies of the Song dynasty”), Ph.D. thesis, National Taiwan University, 1982, p. 161ff.
130. Dong You, *Guangchuan shuba*, f. 1, p. 1b.
131. Zhang Yanyuan, *Lidai minghua ji*, f. 1, p. 1. See also Acker, *Some T'ang*, p. 61ff.
132. Gu Kaizhi, Lu Tanwei, Zhang Sengyou, and Wu Daozi. See Zhang Yanyuan, *Lidai minghua ji*, f. 2, pp. 21–23, and Acker, *Some T'ang*, p. 177ff.
133. “When Huang Quan painted flying birds, their necks and legs were both stretched out. Someone said: ‘If flying birds draw in their neck then they stretch out their legs; if they draw in their legs, they extend their neck. They don't have both stretched out.’ When I investigated the matter, it was indeed so.” Su Shi, “Shu Huang Quan hua que,” *Dongpo tiba*, reprint ed., Taipei, 1973, f. 5, p. 7a. Translation by Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting*, Cambridge, 1971, p. 33, with romanization changed.
134. This is most evident by contrasting Su Shi's comment on the Huang Quan painting with his famous pronouncement that “Those who discuss painting in terms of formal likeness, / Have a level of understanding akin to that of a child.” From the poem, “Shu Yanling Wang Zubo suo hua zhezhi ershou,” *Su Dongpo quanji*, Taipei, 1975, f. 16, p. 230.
135. Paraphrased from Mi Fu, *Hua shi*, in *Huapin congshu*, ed. Liu Haisu, Shanghai, 1982, p. 202. Mi Fu is actually addressing the paintings of a number of contemporary and near-contemporary painters, including Cui Bo, most of whom he considered “not worthy of deep discussion.”
136. Susan Bush presents a number of the relevant texts in *The Chinese Literati on Painting*, pp. 34–43.

## Glossary

Bao Zhao	鮑照
Cai Jing	蔡京
Cai Tao	蔡條
Chen Ruyan	陳汝言
chengqi	承氣
chi	尺
Chongzhengdian	崇政殿
Chuxianggong	儲祥宮
Cui Bo	崔白
cun	寸
Daqingdian	大慶殿
daji	大吉
daiqi	戴氣
Dashao	大韶
Dasheng	大晟
Dazhang	大章
Deng Chun	鄧椿
Di Ku	帝嚳
ding	鼎
dingnai	鼎鼐
Dong You	董道
duanmen	端門
Fangzhouqiao	芳洲橋
feng	鳳
Fouqiugong	浮丘公
gong	宮
Gu Lu Zhang Wu	顧陸張吳
gui(a)	圭
gui(b)	筮
Gujin huajian	古今畫鑒
Han Feizi	韓非子

<i>Huaji</i>	畫繼	Ruimodian	睿謨殿
Huanbichi	環碧池	<i>ruiying</i>	瑞應
<i>huang</i>	凰	<i>Ruiying tu</i>	瑞應圖
Huang Jucai	黃居采	<i>shang</i>	商
Huang Quan	黃筌	<i>shangyuan</i>	上元
<i>huangzhong</i>	黃鍾	Shengying	勝瀛
Huizong	徽宗	Shun	舜
<i>jiao</i>	角	<i>Song gong cheng zhi jing zhong</i>	宋公成之莖鍾
Jin Pinggong	晉平公	Song Taizu	宋太祖
<i>jing</i>	莖	Su Shi	蘇軾
Jiuchenggong	九成宮	<i>suxin</i>	素馨
<i>juan</i>	篆	Sun Rouzhi	孫柔之
<i>kai</i>	楷	<i>taiji</i>	太極
Kuang shi	廣師	Tang Hou	湯垕
<i>kui</i>	麤	Tang Taizong	唐太宗
Kui shi	麤師	<i>taotie</i>	饕餮
<i>li</i>	理	<i>wan Song niansui</i>	萬宋年歲
Li Gonglin	李公麟	Wang Anzhong	王安中
Li Liang	李良	Wang Chong	王充
<i>Lidai minghua ji</i>	歷代名畫記	Wang Mang	王莽
Lin Bu	林逋	Wang Pu	王朴
<i>lingzhi</i>	靈芝	<i>wei</i>	蜚
Liu Bing	劉昴	Wei Hanjin	魏漢津
Liu Chang	劉敞	Wei Yigong	衛懿公
Liuying	六英	Wen Tong	文同
<i>luan</i>	鸞	<i>wenren</i>	文人
Mi Fu	米芾	Wujing	五莖
<i>ming</i>	明	<i>xiang</i>	象
<i>moli</i>	末利	<i>Xiang he jing</i>	相鶴經
Ouyang Xiu	歐陽修	<i>xiang long</i>	祥龍
<i>qilin</i>	麒麟	Xiangfugong Shengzudian	祥符宮聖祖殿
<i>ren</i>	仁	Xu Xi	徐熙



Xuandemen	宣德門	<i>yu</i>	羽
"Xuanhe ruilan ce"	宣和睿覽冊	<i>Yu</i>	禹
Xue Ji	薛稷	<i>yuan he</i>	元鶴
Yan Liben	閻立本	<i>yuzu</i>	鷺鷥
Yanfugong	延福宮	Zhang Yanyuan	張彥遠
<i>yang</i>	陽	Zhai Ruwen	翟汝文
Yao	堯	Zhao Bian	趙抃
Ye Mengde	葉夢得	Zhao Wu	趙屺
<i>yi</i>	義	<i>zheng</i>	徵
<i>yin</i>	陰	<i>zhi yin zhe</i>	知音者
<i>yiren</i>	異人	Zhuan Xu	顓頊



FIG. 1. Huizong, "Auspicious Cranes." Ca. A.D. 1112-26. Handscroll, ink and colors on silk, 51 x 138.2 cm. (with inscription). Liaoning Provincial Museum.



政和壬辰上元之夜必有祥雲拂鬱  
低映端門衆皆仰而視之倏有群鶴  
飛鳴於空半乃有二鶴對峙於鴈尾  
之旒類甚閑適餘比朝翔如應奏節  
往來都民無不稽首瞻望冀異久之  
信時不散迺還歸飛西北隅散感茲  
祥瑞故作詩以紀其實

清曉輒披衣飛覽仙禽呈瑞忽來儀飄，  
元是三山侶西，衆呈千歲安似擬碧鶴  
棲寶閣宣同亦應集天地徘徊嘹唳當丹  
闕故使懂，庶俗知

御製御書并書一 下

FIG. 2. Huizong, Inscription to "Auspicious Cranes."

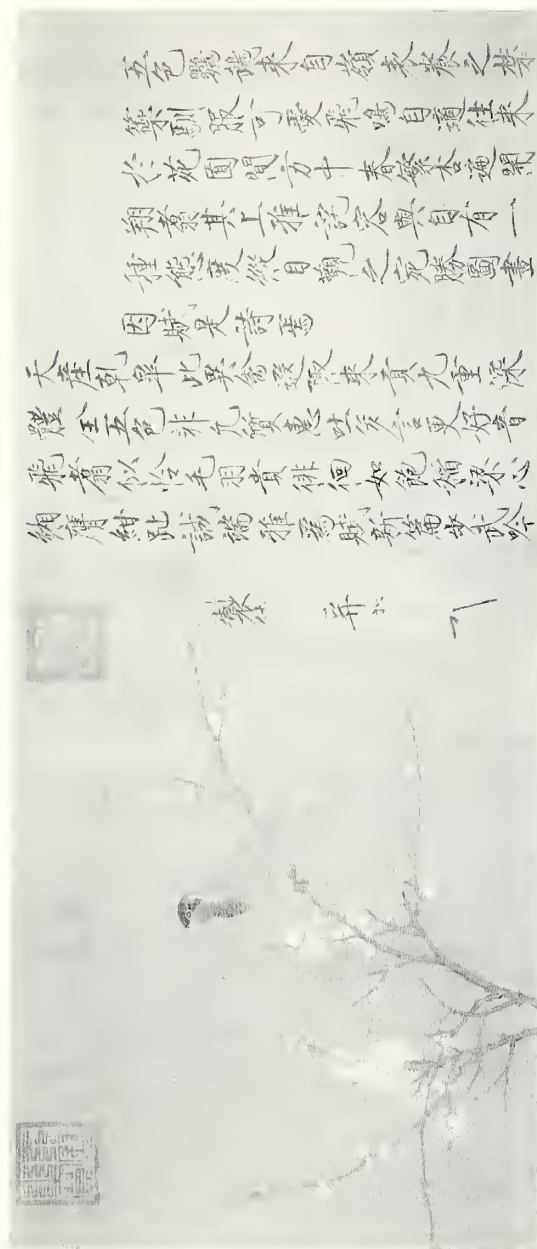
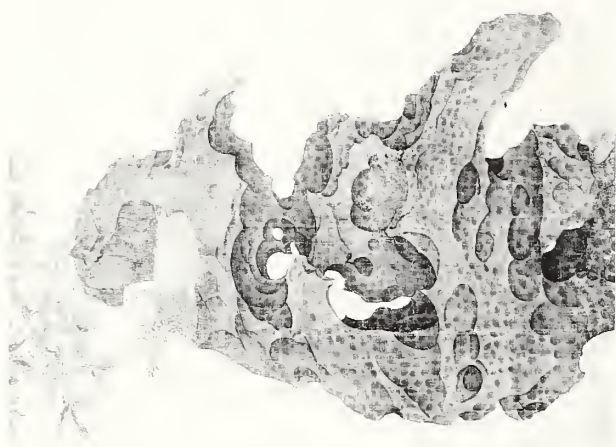


FIG. 4. Huizong, "The Five Colored Parakeet." Ca. A.D. 1112-26. Handscroll, ink and colors on silk, 53.3 x 125.1 cm. Maria Antoinette Evans Fund. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



FIG. 3. Anonymous, "Auspicious Grain." Fourteenth century (?). Hanging scroll, ink and colors on paper, 190.3 x 67.9 cm. Collection of the National Palace Museum, Taiwan, Republic of China.





祥龍石名古才珠璣地之南  
 洲橋之西相對則勝瀛也其勢  
 騰湧若乳龍出雲隨應狀  
 谷乃態莫能具絕妙而言之  
 延親會德香聊以四顧紀之  
 彼美皖城勢若龍抗伏為龍獨稱雄  
 雲凝好色來相偕水潤清輝更不同  
 常帶一峽煙氣長橫公母東窗雨陰空  
 故憑彩筆親模寫賦佳功深未易窮  
 御製嘉禾書堂書一

FIG. 5. Huizong, "Auspicious Dragon Rock." Ca. A.D. 1112-26. Handscroll, ink and colors on silk, 54 x 130 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

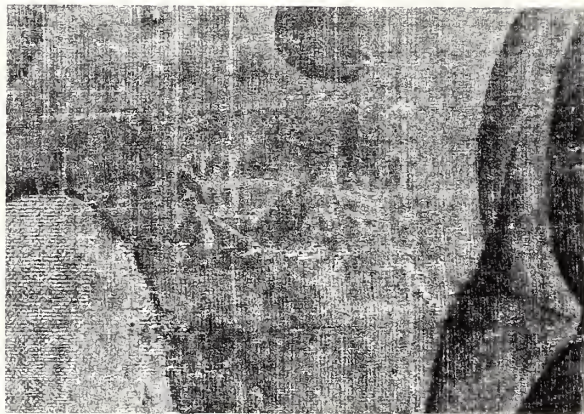


FIG. 6. Detail of "Auspicious Dragon Rock."





FIG. 7. Chen Ruyan, "The Land of Immortals." Before A.D. 1371. Detail of a handscroll, ink and colors on silk. Intended gift to the Cleveland Museum of Art, Mr. and Mrs. A. Dean Perry.



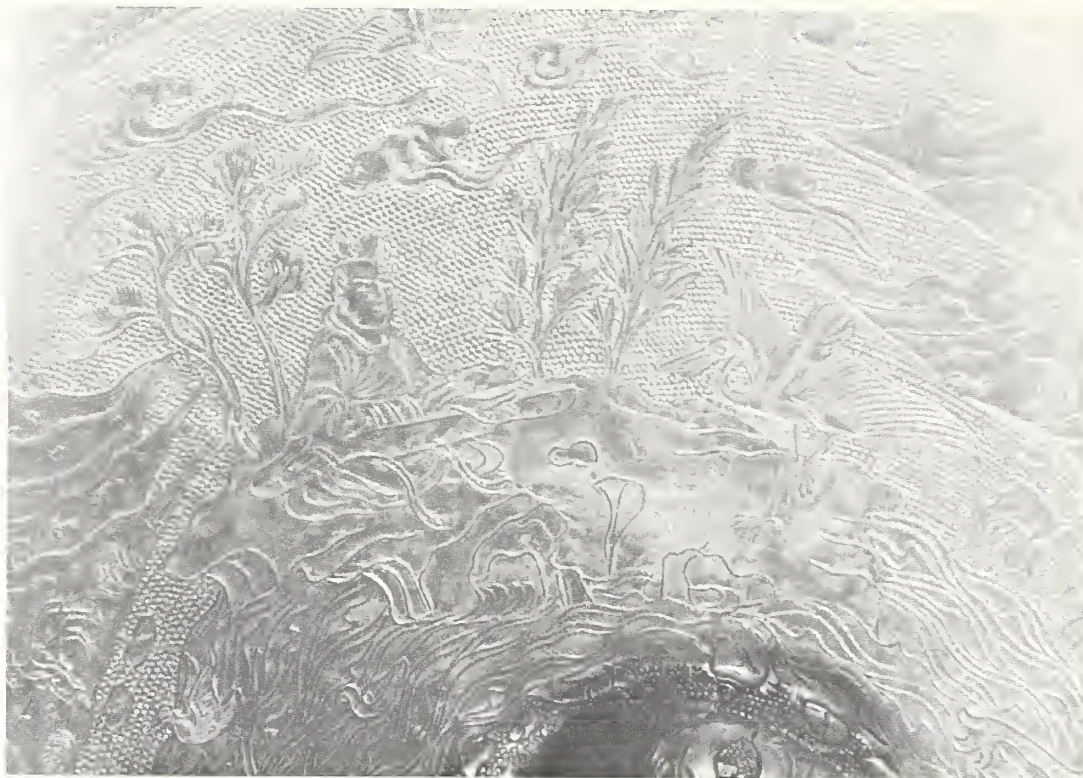


FIG. 8. Detail of a Tang dynasty mirror. Eighth century. Shōsōin, Nara.



FIG. 9. Anonymous, "The Pleasures of the Lute in a Deep Hall." Ca. A.D. 1200.  
Fan, ink and colors on silk, 24.2 x 24.9 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.



FIG. 10. Redrawing of "Auspicious Cranes": the first group of cranes.



FIG. 11. Redrawing of "Auspicious Cranes": the second group of cranes.



FIG. 12. Redrawing of "Auspicious Cranes": the third group of cranes.



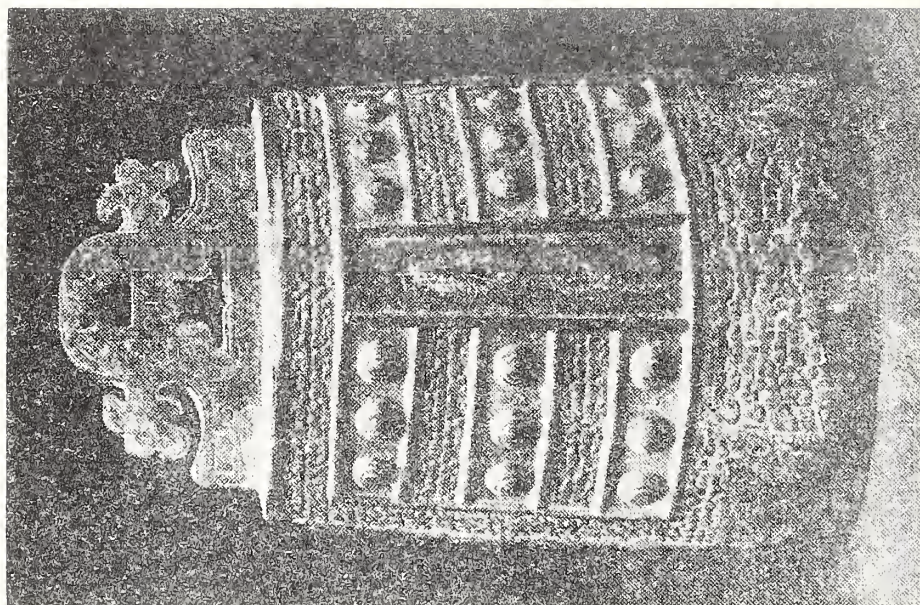


FIG. 15. One of the Dasheng Bells. Ca. A.D. 1105.  
Palace Museum, Beijing. From *Wenwu*, 1964, no. 2, p. 53.



宋公成之晉鐘

FIG. 14. Rubbing of the Inscription  
on the "Jing Bell" from the State of  
Song. From the *Xuanhe bogu tu*,  
fascicle 22.

周宋公晉鐘

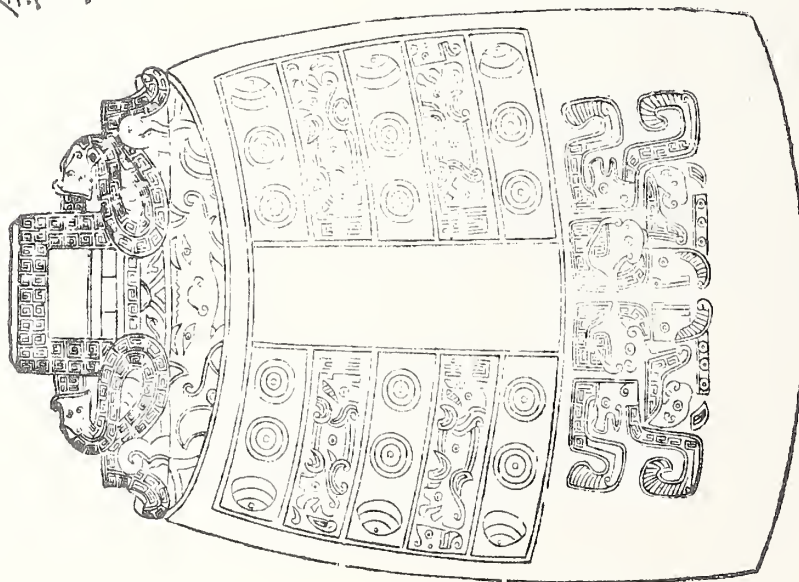


FIG. 13. "Jing Bell" from the State of Song.  
Drawing from the *Xuanhe bogu tu*, fascicle 22.



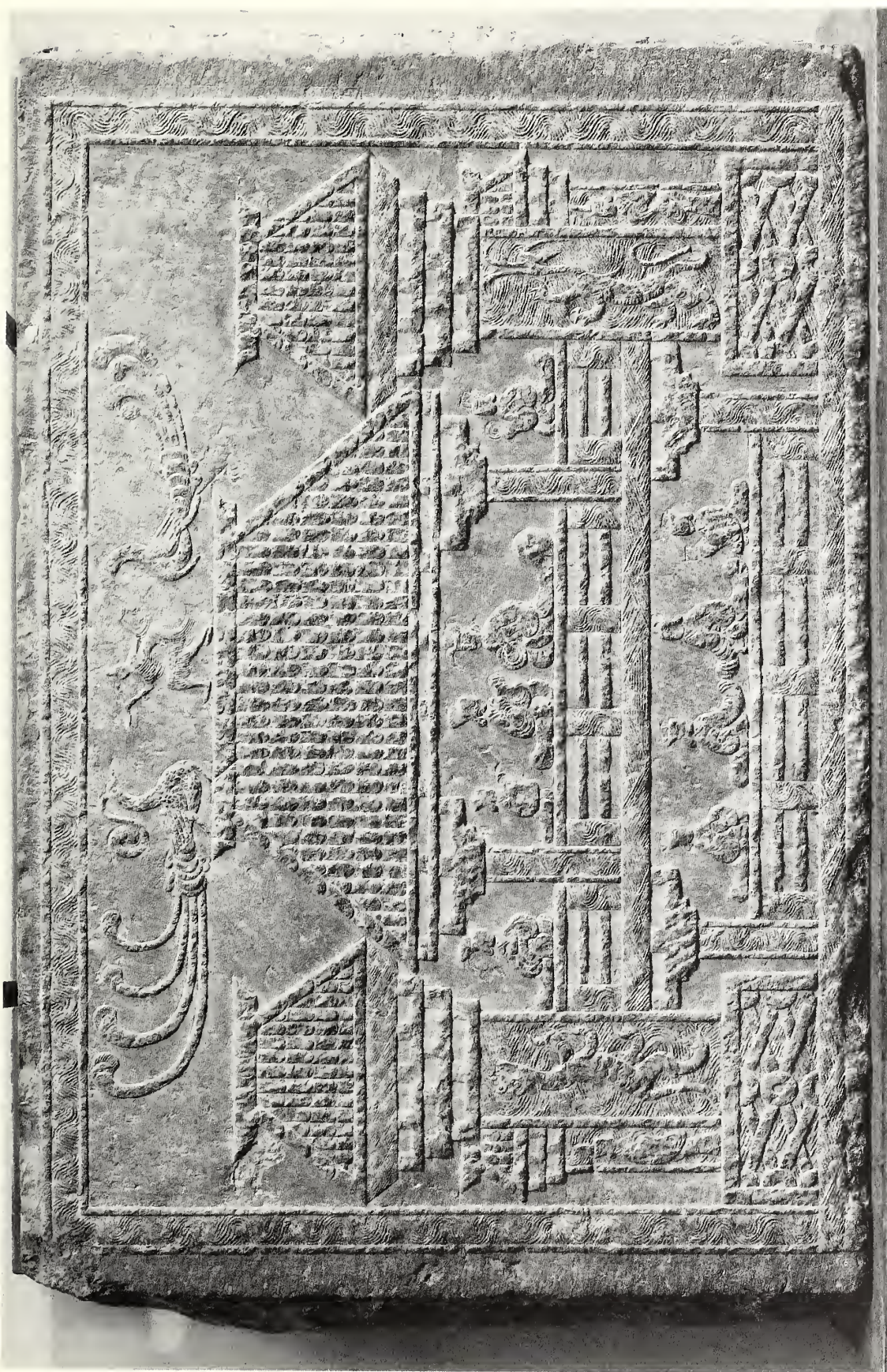


Fig. 16. Tomb Tablet A.D. 114. Limestone. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1920 (20.99).





FIG. 17. *Ding* Tripod. Ca. 1300-1100 B.C. Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 60.18.



FIG. 19. Cui Bo, "Magpies and Hare." A.D. 1061. Hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk, 193.7 x 103.4 cm. National Palace Museum, Taiwan, Republic of China.



FIG. 18. Wen Tong, "Ink Bamboo." Ca. A.D. 1070. Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 131.6 x 105.4 cm. National Palace Museum, Taiwan, Republic of China.





FIG. 20. Su Shi, "Old Tree, Rock and Bamboo." Ca. A.D. 1090. Handscroll, ink on paper. Collection unknown.

# THE FISH LEAVES OF THE ANWAN ALBUM: BADA SHANREN'S JOURNEYS TO A LANDSCAPE OF THE PAST

By HUI-SHU LEE

OVER THE LAST TWENTY YEARS, THE ART OF BADA SHANREN (1626–1705) has unanimously been regarded as one of the most fascinating subjects of Chinese art history. It has also, however, been labeled one of the most difficult. His images of various creatures, flowers, and plants are extremely appealing to the eye—Bada has a gift for making the mundane appear extraordinary—yet more often than not they are presented together with enigmatic texts in the form of poems, couplets, inscriptions, ciphers, and even seals that prove exceedingly difficult to explain. While interpretations of Bada's writings can vary widely, the reason for their difficulty is generally agreed upon: they are the products of a man of extraordinary intelligence, learning, and experience who chose to communicate in a deliberately obscure language. Bada shanren was born an imperial prince, and as such he received the best of Confucian educations. Yet he was also a Buddhist priest and an admirer of Daoist philosophy.<sup>1</sup> An *yimin* (loyalist) active after the fall of the Ming dynasty, Bada shanren lived in an environment that demanded caution and circuity. Whether for reasons of political expediency or simply out of personal predilection, Bada fully engaged his familiarity with the broad expanse of Chinese cultural history to conceal the fundamental issues that underlie his art.

It is my belief that Bada shanren's paintings cannot truly be understood without first "cracking the codes" of his textual puzzles. In this endeavor there have been important precedents in the pioneering studies of Wang Fangyu (Fred Wang), He Huijian (Wai-kam Ho), Rao Zongyi, Li Yeshuang, and Shen Tonglu.<sup>2</sup> I would like to follow the paths established by these scholars and look at Bada shanren's paintings of fish. There is a long history of fish as an established subject for painting in China.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, it is a subject with relatively clearly defined, limited associations: ever since Zhuangzi's famous conversation with Huizi on the banks of the Hao River, fish have come to represent happiness and freedom.<sup>4</sup> This is an association so indelible that already in the early Qing dynasty most of Bada shanren's paintings of fish had gained the generic title "Yule tu," "The Happiness of Fish," yet there is a cruel irony here that will become self-evident. My study will not examine in detail all of Bada shanren's fish paintings. Rather, it is limited to the two paintings of fish and their accompanying poems in Bada shanren's

Anwan album. I hope to demonstrate that Bada shanren's paintings can indeed be explained, but only through a painstaking study of the artist's use of dense layers of poetic and historical allusions, as well as linguistic puns and homophones. In short, one has to map the full extent of the personal iconography the artist creates for his subjects. Once the texts are deciphered, the full impact of his visual images can be appreciated.

In the summer of the *jiashu* year of the Kangxi reign (1694), when Bada shanren was sixty-eight years old, he composed a set of twenty-two album leaves and presented it to a person called Tuiweng.<sup>5</sup> On the first leaf, Bada shanren inscribed the two large characters *anwan* (Fig. 1), which is now the title by which the album is known.<sup>6</sup> As will be clear from the content of the short inscription that follows the two large characters, *anwan* can be translated as "to comfort the late years." The inscription reads:

少文凡所遊履，圖之于室，此志也。

Shaowen [Zong Bing, A.D. 375–443] painted on the wall of his studio all of the various places to which he had traveled. This is what one calls *zhi* ["intent" or "innermost feelings"].

Bada shanren associates his album of paintings with the art of Zong Bing, the Confucian scholar, Buddhist devotee, hermit, traveler, painter, and art theorist, who invented the idea of "a reclining journey," *woyou*, through his paintings when old age prevented him from physically climbing his beloved mountains.<sup>7</sup> While Bada calls forth the idea of Zong Bing's "reclining journey," however, he does not adopt Zong Bing's *woyou* for his title (as other artists often had);<sup>8</sup> instead, he transforms it into the phrase *anwan*. A key word in the inscription is the character *zhi*, "intent." It suggests an association with the well-known expression from the *Shu jing* (*Classic of Historical Documents*), "shi yan zhi," "poetry speaks intent," an idea that is thus elaborated in the "Great Preface" to the *Shi jing* (*Classic of Poetry*): "Poetry is where the intent of the heart/mind goes: what in the heart is intent (*zhi*) is poetry when emitted in words. An emotion moves within and takes form in words."<sup>9</sup> These two passages from the Chinese classics are regarded as the cornerstone to the concept of self-expression in Chinese poetry, and their suggested presence beneath the surface of Bada's inscription is



significant. As this album dates to Bada shanren's late years, and as he himself suggests that, as with Zong Bing, it expresses his "innermost feelings," the Anwan album should be recognized as a tremendously important source for the study of the artist. While my study is limited to only two leaves in the album, I hope that an analysis of the two poems inscribed upon them, as well as the iconography of the fish theme, will help explain the rationale of the title "Anwan."

### *The Mandarin Fish in Lake Qu'e at Sunset*

The sixth leaf of the Anwan album consists of a fish with open mouth and big eyes (Fig. 2). Although the fish is not described in elaborate detail, Bada shanren has painted it so that it is clearly identifiable as a *guiyu* (*Siniperca chuatsi*), known in English as the mandarin perch or mandarin fish (Fig. 3). The background, which indicates water, is left empty, and our attention is thus drawn to the striking expression of the fish. It almost appears as if the fish's upward gaze is directed towards the poem above, which it chants with its open mouth:

左右此何水？  
名之曰曲阿。  
更求淵注處，  
料得晚霞多。

Left and right, what is this water?

"It is named Qu'e [the Grand Crooked]."

I go on seeking the place where the source enters,

Perhaps there will be many beautiful clouds at sunset.<sup>10</sup>

The question and answer in the first two lines of the poem allude to a fourth-century story recorded in Liu Yiqing's (403–44) *Shishuo xinyu* (*A New Account of Tales of the World*), a book from which Bada shanren often drew inspiration.<sup>11</sup> The story is recorded in the chapter entitled "Speech and Conversation" and can be summarized as follows. One day, when Xie Wan (ca. A.D. 321–61),<sup>12</sup> younger brother of the famous prime minister Xie An (A.D. 320–85), passed by the rear lake of Qu'e, he asked his attendants ("left and right"), "What body of water is this?" They replied, "Lake Qu'e." Xie Wan then said, "Undoubtedly it is source-fed and quietly limpid, receptive but not flowing on."<sup>13</sup> Without knowledge of the philosophical and social background of the Wei-Jin period, Xie Wan's comments make little sense. Actually, Xie is playing with the name of the lake by alluding to Daoist concepts, a common practice during this period of renewed interest in Daoism. *Qu* means "curved" or "crooked," and *e*, both "crooked" and "big" or "grand"; the lake was thus named because

of its large size and crooked bank. It is highly probable that Xie Wan, a learned aristocrat, was familiar with Laozi's well-known phrase from chapter twenty-two of the *Daodejing*, "qu ze quan," "to yield [bend] is to be preserved whole."<sup>14</sup> Here, in Wing-tsit Chan's translation, *qu* becomes "to yield." Literally, however, it means "to bend," or "to be crooked," the way by which one will attain the whole (*quan*), or circle, in Laozi's philosophy. When Xie Wan says that the lake is source-fed and receptive, absorbing and collecting (i.e., self-contained, whole, circular, endless—qualities of the Dao), he plays with these Daoist concepts and thus demonstrates his linguistic wit and erudition to his attendants.

Judging from the accompanying image of a fish swimming across the blank space of the paper, in Bada Shanren's poem the term *zuoyou*, "left and right," which in the *Shishuo xinyu* anecdote literally refers to Xie Wan's attendants, seems to describe the surrounding water of Lake Qu'e. Still, the allusion remains unclear until one probes to a deeper level. According to the standard commentary on *Shishuo xinyu* by Liu Xiaobiao (A.D. 462–521), the *Taikang diji* (completed A.D. 282) records a story that explains how Lake Qu'e first received this name. During the reign of the great tyrant Qin Shihuangdi, the first emperor of China (r. 246–10 B.C.), this lake, located near Jiankang (Nanjing), was called Yunyang or Daze, both of which mean "great water." It was so named because of its long, beautiful shape, which was said to resemble a lively dragon. Unfortunately, a Daoist magician told Qin Shihuangdi that a real "dragon" emperor would emerge from the Great Water area to take over the empire. The emperor, being superstitious, believed this and took actions to prevent it by sending an army to divide the Great Water into two parts, "cutting the dragon at its waist," and turning the smooth beautiful bank crooked. From this point on, the lake's name was changed to Qu'e.<sup>15</sup> We learn from this record that behind the name of Qu'e is the tragic suppression of a would-be emperor, or in other words, a metaphor for the murder of a rightful heir to the throne. As Liu's commentary would have been known to Bada, it becomes entirely possible that the story of Qin Shihuangdi's mutilation of the lake underlies Bada Shanren's adoption of the Xie Wan allusion from the *Shishuo xinyu*. Given Bada's own historical circumstances, it becomes more than possible. Though he never directly states it, the informed reader must assume that Bada intended the tragic legend of Lake Qu'e to refer to the decline of the Ming dynasty. Lake Qu'e is not only the endless, self-contained circle, a lake of profound depths that has no exit; it is also the lake of a dead dragon—a lake filled with promises never to be realized. From this perspective, the poem expresses the *zhi* of Bada shanren himself, and the fish,

on one level, can be considered a self-image of the artist.

Let us pursue this course of interpretation. In the first two lines Bada establishes Lake Qu'e, where we presume the mandarin fish is swimming, and suggests the hidden symbol of a dead dragon emperor and lost dynasty. The second half of the poem begins with the fish "seeking the place where the source fills in or enters." The image is reminiscent of the famous couplet by the Tang poet Wang Wei (A.D. 701–61):

行到水窮處，  
坐看雲起時。

I go to the place where the water ends,  
And sit and watch the time the clouds rise.<sup>16</sup>

There are, however, important differences. Whereas Wang Wei, the human poet, walks along a stream's bank, following the water's linear direction to its end (or source; Wang Wei's poem is ambiguous), Bada Shanren, the fish poet, swims ceaselessly in the circular waters of a lake that has no exit. Whether Bada is seeking Lake Qu'e's origins or end, one feels that he is lost in an activity that holds little promise of resolution. Hope for such a resolution, however, is provided in the final line, "Perhaps there will be many beautiful clouds at sunset." Again, an interesting contrast can be made with Wang Wei's couplet: instead of the image of a destination reached and clouds viewed as they first arise, Bada offers a potential future moment when those clouds will appear just at the close of day. *Wanxia*, "sunset clouds," can be considered the second key expression in Bada's poem after *Qu'e*. It is not a term that necessarily suggests a single earlier text for a source, but the image resonates with the most famous poem describing a sunset written in China, Li Shang-yin's (ca. A.D. 813–58) "Leyou Height." Here is James Liu's translation:

Toward evening I feel disconsolate;  
So I drive my carriage up the ancient heights.  
The setting sun has infinite beauty—  
Only, the time is approaching nightfall!<sup>17</sup>

Li composed this poem at the historical site of Leyou Height near the Tang capital Chang'an. As later commentators have pointed out, the poet entrusts to the image of the setting sun his own personal lament for the decline of the Tang empire.<sup>18</sup> Bada seems to carry forth this same idea in his poem, the sunset now a metaphor for the final eclipsing of the Ming dynasty. In both Li Shangyin's and Bada shanren's poems, the setting is late—late in the day, late in regard to the decline of their respective dynasties, and, at least for Bada, late in his life.<sup>19</sup> By announcing his expectation

of beautiful clouds at sunset, Bada signals a consciousness of the approach of the end of his life. The tone is serene but also melancholy.

Before we leave the mandarin fish leaf of the Anwan album, mention should be made of a related poem that appears on at least two other Bada shanren fish paintings. The paintings are the "Fish and Rock" handscroll in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Fig. 4) and a hanging scroll dated 1692 of a single fish in the Nanjing Museum (Fig. 5). The Nanjing scroll is particularly important because of the resemblance of its upward-staring fish, drifting in nothing, to the mandarin fish in Lake Qu'e.<sup>20</sup>

三萬六千頃，  
畢竟有魚行。  
到此一黃頰，  
海綿冷上笙。

Under these thirty-six thousand acres,  
In the end, there are fish swimming.  
Here has arrived a single "yellow cheek,"  
With the ocean tide rises the chilly notes of the panpipe.<sup>21</sup>

The image of numerous fish swimming under the expanse of a vast water might be likened to the situation of the Ming loyalists. It is an identification strengthened by the fact that the word for fish in Chinese, *yu(a)*, is an exact homophone for *yu(b)*, "left-over," or "remnant," (i.e., the Ming *yimin*). As for Bada's painting, although the single fish in the Nanjing scroll is rather sketchily painted and its type, consequently, not immediately recognized, the third line of the poem provides its identity. According to the illustrated Chinese encyclopedia *Sancai tuihui* (published in 1607), the "yellow-cheek," *huangjia*, is the name of a fish otherwise called the *chang* (*Sparus Latus Loutuyn*) (Fig. 6), whose most striking characteristic is its "pure yellow" jaw.<sup>22</sup> At least one other scholar has already noted the frequency with which Bada utilizes the color yellow in his writings and suggested symbolic significance.<sup>23</sup> In fact, "yellow" in Chinese, *huang(a)*, is an exact homophone for *huang(b)*, "imperial." In this respect, the image of the "yellow-cheek" *chang* fish becomes highly suggestive, since its pure yellow color might be likened to the idea of the pure blood of the imperial family. The fish, in other words, again becomes a self-image—the single, upward-staring fish, one of many "left-overs" swimming under the thirty-six thousand acres of water—the royal prince of the fallen Ming.

With both the mandarin fish leaf of the Anwan album and the 1692 Nanjing scroll Bada shanren presents images of a single fish and poems that strongly suggest symbolic, self-reflective readings. Moreover, the similarities of formal structure between the visual images of the two paintings extend to that of the verbal images as



well. One of Bada shanren's favorite poetic devices is to end his poem with a detached yet powerful and lingering image. Though it gives the appearance of being somewhat disjointed, I suggest that it is this last image of the final line that establishes the essential tone of the entire poem. In this respect, one notes with these two very similar paintings the suggestion of an interesting transformation from 1692 to 1694. An image that suggests a mournful atmosphere ("the chilly notes of the panpipe rising with the ocean tide") becomes one that remains sad but is also splendid ("many beautiful clouds at sunset"). Bada shanren's mind seems to be attaining a degree of peaceful resignation.

### *The Haggard Fish*

The second fish painting in the Anwan album is of an unidentified small fish, a strikingly pitiful image drifting in the comparatively huge empty space of the painting (Fig. 7). Bada does not portray the fish with any distinctive features; he appears simply as an insignificant and nondescript minnow of simple outlines and pale ink. A single blank dot for an eye stares vacantly ahead, this time oblivious to the poem in the upper right corner:

到此偏憐憔悴人，  
緣何花下兩三旬？  
定昆明在魚兒放，  
木芍藥開金馬春。

Here comes the one who once was favored, now turned haggard,  
Why does he linger these many days under the flowers?  
I had Kunming remained the fish could be released,  
When the tree peony bloomed, it was spring at Jinma.

Among Bada's extant paintings are at least four others of fish, all dated from 1694–95, with this same poem. Both this leaf from the Anwan album and a hanging scroll of birds, fish, and rock (Fig. 8) were done in the fifth month of 1694.<sup>24</sup> In the same year, on the twenty-sixth day of the eighth month, he wrote it on a hanging scroll of a single fish (Fig. 9), and the following year he wrote it twice, once in the summer on an album leaf depicting seven small fish (Fig. 10) and again in the winter on a folding fan portraying twenty-four tiny fish (Fig. 11).<sup>25</sup> All of this strongly suggests that this was an extremely important poem for Bada. Consequently, it is of paramount importance to unravel the puzzles within in order to grasp the fundamentals of Bada shanren's fish iconography.

This is a typical Bada-style poem in that it not only possesses a great deal of ambiguity but also breaks most of the common grammatical rules of Chinese poetry. Nevertheless, though his language is hard to under-

stand, even a cursory reading of the poem suggests a message that is extremely intense. The tension emerges from the unclear nature of the relationships among the individual lines of the verse. As is common with Bada's poems, a scene is first set in the opening lines before the main issue is raised. The closing line juxtaposes images that, presumably, are intended to resolve the issue. In this poem Bada begins by introducing the main character—the one who was once favored but has now turned haggard. The term *pianlian*, "one who is especially favored or doted upon," appears to be derived from a famous poem by the Tang poet Yuan Zhen (779–831), in which Yuan's deceased wife, Wei Cong, is compared to the youngest and favorite daughter of Xie An.<sup>26</sup> Yuan Zhen's purpose was to point out his wife's distinguished and pampered aristocratic background, and by consequence, we are encouraged to read into Bada's use of the term a reference to his own origins—a favored prince of the Ming imperial family. Bada couples the term *pianlian* with *qiaocui ren*, "the haggard person," shifting the image and time to the present, after the fall of the Ming. The image of the haggard person, whom we identify with the fish, may allude to Su Shi's (1037–1101) lament for himself as "the pitiful one," *kelian ren*, likened to a fish stuck in the mud in his poem "Releasing the Fish":

東坡也是可憐人，  
披扶泥沙收細碎。  
正似此魚逃網中，  
未與造物遊數外。

... Dongpo [Su Shi] is also a pitiful one,  
Floundering about in mud and sand, mired in trivial things.  
... Just like this fish that has escaped from the net,  
But still cannot wander with Creation, free from its fate.<sup>27</sup>

Su Shi wrote this poem during a politically disappointing period of his life. He had requested a transfer from the capital in 1091 and been reassigned first to Yingzhou and then to Yangzhou in 1092. Recalling the setting of West Lake at Yingzhou, Su Shi identifies with a pond fish—released from one pond only to enter into the limited freedom of another.<sup>28</sup> Proof of the fact that Bada knew Su Shi's poem and Su's use of the fish as a self-image comes from Bada shanren's cryptic last line of a poem on the Bamboo leaf of an album in the Princeton University Art Museum collection: "Yu xi Zizhan rou Lüwu" ("Fish, that's Zizhan [Su Shi], the meat's Lüwu [Bada]").<sup>29</sup> Fish and meat refer to sacrificial foods in China, and it appears that Bada saw Su Shi as a fellow victim being "served up to their enemies." The allusion stems from a well-known story in Sima Qian's *Shiji*, in which Fan Kui, loyal retainer to the future founder of the Han dynasty, Liu Bang, ruefully comments that the rival general Xiang Yu and his

troops are like knives and a cutting board awaiting the fish and meat.<sup>30</sup>

In the second line of the poem, Bada shanren raises the main issue—a question is asked, thereby drawing attention to the past circumstances that have led to the fish's present situation. In the Chinese literary tradition the image of lingering “under the flowers” is often associated with getting drunk to comfort oneself.<sup>31</sup> The closing two lines that follow the question are composed of a sequence of images: Kunming, the releasing of fish, tree peony, Jinma, and spring. Juxtaposed together they seem extremely ambiguous, but once the riddles are solved, Bada's meaning is clear and intense. Since Kunming and the fish are mentioned together, previous scholars have suggested an allusion to the story of Emperor Wudi of the Han dynasty (r. 141–87 B.C.), who once dreamed of being rewarded with a precious pearl from an immortal fish after releasing it in his recreated Lake Kunming of the Shanglin Park at the capital.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, the term Jinma has been associated with a gate by this name, where new officials waited for the emperor's summons during the Han dynasty. It is because of these associations that Rao Zongyi has suggested that this poem might be satirizing the Ming *yimin* who attended the new rulers' *boxue hongci* (Erudite Literatus) examination beginning in 1678.<sup>33</sup> I believe, however, that a more convincing interpretation of this poem appears once a different set of associations to the images is uncovered, associations that also include the image of the tree peony. In fact, the names Kunming and Jinma are seen quite often in late Ming and early Qing literary works, not as historical allusions but as place names in Yunnan, which was a famous Buddhist center during this period. After the decline of the Ming dynasty, many loyalists escaped to Buddhist temples in southwest China.<sup>34</sup> Kunming, the biggest lake in the area, located between the mountains Jinma and Bijie, appears in a number of poems as a Buddhist holy land.<sup>35</sup> The most famous of the late Ming poets, Wu Meicun (1609–71), for example, began one of the many poems he wrote to the monk Cangxue of Yunnan with the line, “I have heard that on Kunming's waters, / Heavenly flowers scatter beyond number.”<sup>36</sup> Here Kunming's waters clearly refer to the Yunnan area. Much more important than its religious status, however, was Yunnan's role as a loyalist political base for a period of time after the establishment of the Qing dynasty in 1644. The last Ming prince, Zhu Youlang, succeeded his father as the “Prince of Gui” (Guiwang) in early 1646, was declared Emperor Yongli later in the same year, and then fled to Yunnan in 1656. Although the Yongli reign lasted only sixteen years (1646–62), his Yunnan government symbolized the last hope of the Ming restoration movement.<sup>37</sup> When Emperor Yongli and his son were caught and killed by Wu Sangui at

Kunming in the fourth month of 1662, the last pretensions of the Ming imperial descendants were finally destroyed.<sup>38</sup> Many Ming loyalists lamented this historical tragedy in secret writings. For example, although Wu Meicun's “Dianchi nao chui” (“The Triumphant Song of Dianchi [Yunnan]”) was commissioned by the new Qing rulers to celebrate their conquest of Yunnan, if one reads between the lines of Wu's poem, one discovers that he has hidden his deepest sorrow within.<sup>39</sup>

This historical background offers the major clue for solving the riddle of Bada's poem. If the fish is associated with the Ming loyalists, or Bada himself, then the term Kunming should refer to Lake Kunming in Yunnan, just as Jinma should refer to the Buddhist mountain Jinma located by Lake Kunming. I suspect, however, that there is more to this third line of Bada's poem. The opening character, *ding*, plays a highly ambiguous role in the line's syntax. It may function simply as an adverb, with the meaning of “certainly” or “definitely.” Or it may function as an auxiliary verb, in which case it would translate as “to settle” or “pacify” Kunming, though in this case the meaning becomes slightly redundant with the main verb *zai*, “to exist.” There is a third possibility, however, and one that suggests an important hidden message. *Ding* can also serve as a noun. It is the name of the star that governs construction in China,<sup>40</sup> which, in the proper position in the sky, signals the optimum conditions for the building of an imperial palace. It can also function as a symbol for the restoration of a country. The allusion comes from an ode from the State of Yong in the *Shijing* (*Classic of Poetry*), the earliest anthology of Chinese poetry. The song, in Arthur Waley's translation, begins with the following lines: “When *Ding* star is in the middle of the sky, / We begin to build the palace at Chu.”<sup>41</sup>

According to the Mao commentary, this poem was composed after the state of Wei was invaded by the barbarian Di tribes from the north. In the year 658 B.C., Duke Wen then relocated the capital to the northern reaches of the southern region known as Chu, where he rebuilt the palace. His people were pleased and thus composed this poem to praise him.<sup>42</sup> If we read *ding* as the Ding Star in Bada's poem, the syntax of the line still remains unclear. Nevertheless, such a reading adds an underlying resonance of meaning that enhances the emotional power and overall coherence of the poem. By drawing an analogy between Duke Wen and Emperor Yongli, Bada shanren points to the hopes that once lay with the restoration movement in Yunnan. “If the Ding Star was present, then at Kunming the fish could have been released”—this is how Bada's line might read. In the Buddhist retreat of Kunming, the “haggard one,” like Su Shi's floundering fish, might have found some degree of freedom, if only the restoration movement



had been destined to succeed.<sup>43</sup>

The *mushaoyao*, or “tree peony,” of the final line is also known as the *jiangli* or “parting flower” in Chinese literature; people present it to friends when they are separating.<sup>44</sup> In China, the tree peony is regarded as a late spring flower, representing the fourth month.<sup>45</sup> Bada’s use of the flower must be read in the context of the other images in his poem. If I am correct in seeing this poem as the lament for a specific historical event—the death of Emperor Yongli and the destruction of the Ming loyalists’ hopes in Yunnan—the significance of the tree peony must lie in its symbolic role as the flower of parting and in the fact that it blooms in the fourth month, the same time of year that the last Ming emperor was executed in Yunnan in 1662.

The potent symbolism suggested in this reading of the poem on the haggard fish leaf of the Anwan album perhaps explains why Bada repeatedly inscribed it on his fish paintings. Clearly, it points to an event of paramount importance to the artist. Among the other paintings inscribed with this poem is the folded fan depicting twenty-four small fish in Wang Fangyu’s collection. The following note written by Bada accompanies the poem (Fig. 11):

甲戌題畫，明年承過峰和上枉顧為正。

This poem was composed in the *jiashu* year [1694]. In the winter of the next year the monk Guofeng looked it over for me.

The monk named Guofeng has been identified by Li Yeshuang as a man surnamed Zhu from Anhui, who, like Bada, was originally a member of the Ming imperial family.<sup>46</sup> After the fall of the Ming, he became a monk and lived in a temple in Kunming called Hsianghaian. Guofeng was accomplished in the arts of calligraphy, seal-carving, and painting, and he was especially known for his talents as a painter of orchids, which were commonly compared to those of the Song dynasty loyalist Zheng Sixiao (1239–1316). All of this reveals that not only was Guofeng a Ming *yimin*; he also shared the same imperial background and interest in the arts as Bada. The fact that Bada showed his poem on the haggard fish to Guofeng, a relative and comrade, offers further support for our interpretation of Bada’s poem as a lament for the destruction of the Ming loyalists’ last hopes in Yunnan.

## Conclusion

The analysis of these two poems on the fish leaves of the Anwan album demonstrates the importance of studying Bada shanren’s poems in order to understand his art. A personal iconography emerges, forged from

the artist’s labyrinthine explorations of his nation’s cultural heritage. And once this iconography is deciphered, we find the true genius of Bada shanren: an ability to comment poignantly and lucidly on the momentous historical events that shaped his life. Fish is only one Bada shanren subject, albeit an important one. Future studies of his other subjects will undoubtedly slowly work out the full extent of this artist’s difficult yet fascinating language of art.

To do true justice to the subject of fish in Bada shanren’s painting, it would be necessary to review systematically all of the related paintings and poems over the artist’s career, especially such important documents as the Cleveland scroll.<sup>47</sup> Once this is accomplished, further subtleties of Bada shanren’s use of the fish image will undoubtedly emerge. To give one example: throughout this study I have suggested that the essential identification of fish is with the artist himself—the imperial prince “left-over” or “remnant.” Yet a distinction should probably be made between the carefully described mandarin fish of the first leaf and the more loosely painted, pitiful-looking “haggard” fish. Just as the word for fish can be considered a pun for “left-over,” the *gui* of *guiyu*, “mandarin fish,” is an exact homophone of the *gui* of Guiwang, or “Prince of Gui”—the title inherited by Emperor Yongli from his father in 1646 before he was proclaimed emperor later that same year.<sup>48</sup> Considering the legend of Lake Qu’e, the intended source of a true, legitimate king, it would be perfectly appropriate to see Bada shanren’s mandarin fish as a symbol of the “lost” Emperor Yongli. This might also suggest a modified interpretation of the painted image of the fish. Perhaps his upward-staring pupils are the sorrowful manifestation of the Chinese expression “*si bumin mu*,” or “to die with one’s eyes open”—used here to portray a dead emperor who dies with lingering regrets. They may also, however, reflect the anger and sorrow of the Ming loyalists and Bada himself. The specific symbolic functions of the images may not be clear, but the message is—the lament for a dead emperor in an environment that appears hopelessly, endlessly circular. In contrast, we are encouraged to see the haggard fish as more an image of the less significant and numerous *yimin*, including Bada. Perhaps Bada himself is the intended underlying subject when one such fish is portrayed, as in the Anwan leaf, and his compatriots *en masse* when a school of fish is shown, as in the fan of Wang Fangyu’s collection. Such fish have no truly distinctive features—just pale shadows of light ink floating in a huge empty space—but the visual effect perfectly complements the poem’s imagery of scattered, left-over subjects swimming aimlessly, unable to gain release and realize the promised happiness and freedom that has been associated with

fish since at least the time of Zhuangzi.

In essence, both of the fish leaves of the Anwan album refer to events of the past and to issues that had long been resolved. Yet clearly, these were also issues that preoccupied Bada shanren throughout his whole life. In 1694, when the Anwan album was painted, Bada was approaching seventy—an old man seeking some degree of peace in a world that had long denied his identity. If the subtle shift of tone from the 1692 poem on the Nanjing scroll to the poem on the mandarin fish leaf of the Anwan album is any indication, Bada had, perhaps, finally grown to accept his fate and admit the

eclipsing of his dynasty. In other words, by painting the events of his past, Bada shanren confronts personal trauma in a cathartic attempt at reconciliation, entrusting his will, his innermost feelings, to these words and visual images. “Anwan”—“to comfort his late years.” There is a strong element of irony in Bada’s choice of this title. Zong Bing comforted his late years by reliving his sojourns in the great mountains of his past. For Bada, such journeys were to the landscapes of pain and tragedy. The Anwan album is autobiography. In it we discover the deep entangled knot of emotions that was the main source of Bada shanren’s creativity.



## Notes

My own interest in Bada shanren developed in 1987 during two seminars devoted to the artist led by Professors Fangyu (Fred) Wang and Richard Barnhart at Yale University. The seminars served as preparation for an exhibition entitled "Master of the Lotus Garden: The Life and Art of Bada Shanren (1626–1705)," which opened in the fall of 1990. I would like to mention my appreciation to my two teachers for their expert guidance and advice. I would also like to thank Professor Hans Frankel of Yale University for reading and commenting on my manuscript, and my husband, Professor Peter Sturman of the University of California, Santa Barbara, for his suggestions and editorial assistance.

1. Most of the numerous studies of Bada shanren's life tend to focus on relatively specific issues, though a recent exception is Wen Fong, "Stages in the Life and Art of Chu Ta (A.D. 1626–1705)," *Archives of Asian Art*, v. 40, 1987, pp. 6–23. The interested reader is also encouraged to look at the relevant articles (especially those of Wang Fangyu, Ye Ye [Wu Tong], and Wang Shiqing) in Wang Fangyu, ed. *Bada shanren lunji*, Taipei, 1984, as well as Bada shanren jinianguan, ed., *Bada shanren yanjiu*, 2 v., Nanchang, 1986, 1988. The essays by Wang Fangyu for the catalogue to the exhibition "Master of the Lotus Garden: The Life and Art of Bada Shanren" offer the most detailed and up-to-date biography of the artist in English.
2. Wang Fangyu, "Bada shanren shi shi jie" ("Attempting to explain Bada shanren's poems"), and "Bada shanren Shishuo xinyu shi—buke jie ze ke bujie, bujie yi bujie jie zhi" ("Zhu Da's *Shishuo xinyu* poems—not explainable, then do not explain it; not explaining, then resolve it without explanation"), both in *Bada shanren lunji*, pp. 345–56, 367–78. The latter article is translated into English by Aileen Huang Wei and Wang Fangyu in *The Translation of Art*, Rendition #6, Hong Kong, 1976, pp. 70–84. Wai-kam Ho, catalogue entry to "Fish and Rocks" in *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting*, Cleveland, 1980, pp. 318–19. Rao Zongyi, "Geshan guinian huace ba" ("The inscription on Geshan's 'Guinian' album"), *Wenwu*, v. 10, 1983, pp. 47–50; "Bada shanren Shishuo shi jie—jian ji qi jiazhi huaniao ce" ("Interpreting Bada shanren's *Shishuo* poems and his bird-and-flower album of the jiazhi year"), in *Lunji*, pp. 169–81; "Quanqi xiesheng ce tiji suoyin" ("Seeking the hidden sources in the inscribed lines of the album of sketches by Quanqi"), in *Bada shanren yanjiu*, v. 2, pp. 108–12. Li Yeshuang, "Bada shanren kongque tu mixin" ("The secret of Bada shanren's peacock painting"), in *Lunji*, pp. 219–22; "Bada shanren yu Yunnan guofeng" ("Bada shanren and Monk Guofeng of Yunnan"), in *Lunji*, pp. 205–10. Shen Tonglu, "Shishi Bada shanren tihua shi" ("Attempting to interpret Bada shanren's poems inscribed on paintings"), in *Bada shanren yanjiu*, v. 1, pp. 112–41.
3. "Fish and dragons" are one of the ten "gates" of subject matter listed in the *Xuanhe huapu* of the late Northern Song. *Xuanhe huapu* (*Huashi congshu* edition), Shanghai, 1982, *juan* 9.
4. See Wang Fuzhi, ed., *Zhuangzi jie*, *juan* 17, p. 148, and Burton Watson, tr., *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings*, New York, 1961, p. 110. The following is Burton Watson's translation, with the romanization changed: "Zhuangzi and Huizi were strolling along the dam of the Hiao River when Zhuangzi said, 'See how the minnows come out and dart around where they please! That's what fish really enjoy!' Huizi said, 'You're not a fish—how do you know what fish enjoy?' Zhuangzi said, 'You're not I, so how do you know I don't know what fish enjoy?' Huizi said, 'I'm not you, so I certainly don't know what you know. On the other hand, you're certainly not a fish—so that still proves you don't know what fish enjoy!' Zhuangzi said, 'Let's go back to your original question, please. You asked me how I know what fish enjoy—so you already knew I knew it when you asked the question. I know it by standing here beside the Hao.'"
  5. Most scholars identify Tuiweng as the Ming loyalist monk Jiqi, whose original name was Li Hongchu (1605–72). By 1694, when Bada composed the Anwan album, however, Jiqi had been dead for a long time. The problem of identifying Tuiweng thus remains unsolved. See Wang Fangyu, "Bada shanren he Shitao de gong tong youran" ("The mutual friends of Bada shanren and Shitao"), in *Lunji*, pp. 458–59.
  6. The Anwan album is now in the Sumitomo collection in Japan. According to Bada shanren's own inscription on the last leaf of the album, it was completed during the fifth to the sixteenth days of the fifth month, 1694, and consists of twenty-two leaves. The number of leaves in the album remains the same. However, three leaves are of later date, suggesting that certain changes took place in the album's composition after Bada shanren's inscription was written. The three leaves are one of two quails, dated the ninth day of the ninth month, 1694, a landscape dated 1702, and a leaf of narcissus, undated but carrying the signature "Shide," which was used by Bada after 1702.
  7. Bada shanren appears to have been a great admirer of Zong Bing, a fellow hermit of generations past with whom Bada seems to have had much in common. In the same Anwan album is a landscape leaf (1694) carrying a poem that once again alludes to Zong Bing—a poem, moreover, that was inscribed at least four other times by Bada. For the biography of Zong Bing and his "dream journeying" see *Songshu*, Beijing, 1974, *juan* 93, pp. 2778–79, and Zhang Yanyuan, *Lidai minghua ji*, Yu Jianhua ed., Hong Kong, 1973, *juan* 6, pp. 128–31. See also Susan Bush, "Tsung Ping's Essay on Painting Landscape and the 'Landscape Buddhism' of Mount Lu," in Susan Bush and Christian Murck, ed., *Theories of the Arts in China*, Princeton, 1983, pp. 132–64.
  8. A number of artists have used Zong Bing's *woyou* in their titles, including Bada shanren's contemporary, Cheng Zhengkui (1604–77). According to Zhou Lianggong, Cheng painted some five hundred landscape scrolls, each entitled "Reclining Journey among Rivers and Mountains." Years earlier, Shen Zhou (1427–1509) painted an album of various subjects with the title "Reclining Journey" (now in the Palace Museum, Beijing). Shen, who also mentions Zong Bing as his source of inspiration, is an important precedent to Bada shanren since both artists painted albums comprised of a wide range of seemingly random subjects.
  9. Translated and discussed by Pauline Yu, *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition*, Princeton, 1987, pp. 31–32.
  10. Revised translation from Wang Fangyu, "Chu Ta's *Shishuo xinyu* Poems," in *Rendition*, pp. 73–74.
  11. Bada's interest in the *Shishuo xinyu* was first pointed out and discussed by Wang Fangyu. See his "Chu Ta's *Shishuo xinyu*

- Poems," in *Rendition*, pp. 70–84.
12. For the biography of Xie Wan, see *Jin shu*, Beijing, 1974, *juan* 79, pp. 2086–87.
  13. Liu Yiqing, *Shishuo xinyu jianshu*, ed. Yu Jiaxi, Beijing, 1983, pp. 136–37. Translation adapted from Richard B. Mather, "Shishuo Hsin-yu": *A New Account of Tales of the World*, Minneapolis, 1976, p. 67. My translation differs from Mather's in that I read *yuan* as "source" rather than "deep" or "profound."
  14. Translation by Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton, 1963, p. 151. Laozi, *Daodejing*, Taipei, 1968, *juan* 22, p. 126.
  15. *Taikang diji*, in *Shuofu*, the Yuanwei shantang version of the Ming compilation. See *Shuofu sanzong*, Shanghai, 1988, p. 2795. See also Mather, *Shih-shuo*, p. 67.
  16. From the poem "Zhongnan bieye" ("The Zhongnan retreat"). Wang Wei, *Wang Youcheng jizhu*, Taipei, 1966, *juan* 3, p. 4a.
  17. James Liu, *The Poetry of Li Shang-yin: Ninth-Century Baroque Poet*, Chicago, 1969, p. 160.
  18. For a discussion of this poem see Liu Xuekai and Yu Shucheng, ed., *Li Shangyin shige jiji*, Beijing, 1988, pp. 1943–46.
  19. Li Shangyin's poem is undated. The opening line to "Leyou Height," which begins with the characters *xiangwan* ("toward evening," "approaching the late hours,"), could almost serve as the rationale for Bada's painting of the Anwan album—"to comfort the late years." Bada seems to be speaking in harmony with Li Shangyin's voice, which makes it more than possible that this specific poem was one of the sources of inspiration for Bada's painting and poem.
  20. This is one of three poems inscribed on the Cleveland "Fish and Rock" scroll, occupying the upper left corner. The visual image of this scroll, however, mainly illustrates the center poem of the two carps, presumably the major theme of the composition. Though the Cleveland scroll is undated, it was probably completed around 1692, based on the date of the poem on the Nanjing scroll.
  21. Translation based on that of Wai-kam Ho, *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting*, Cleveland, 1980, p. 318. *Haimian*, here loosely translated as "ocean tide" on the basis of the soft, flowing movements suggested by the term *mian*, could also refer to sea sponge. Perhaps Bada associates the somewhat blocky form of the *sheng*, or Chinese panpipes, with the amorphous form and numerous holes of the sea sponge.
  22. Wang Qi and Wang Siyi, *Sancai tuhui*, Taipei, 1970, "Niao shou," *juan* 5, p. 2278.
  23. Vito Giacalone, *Chu Ta: A Selection of Paintings and Calligraphy*, New York, 1972, p. 5.
  24. In an unknown Chinese collection. See Wang Zidou, *Bada shanren shuhua ji*, Beijing, 1983, v. 1, p. 120.
  25. The hanging scroll and folding fan are in the collection of Wang Fangyu. The album leaf is in the Mushakoji Memorial Hall collection in Japan.
  26. The line reads, "Lord Xie's youngest, his favorite daughter," from the poem "San qian beihuai" ("Three Elegies"). See Yuan Zhen, *Yuanshi changqian ji*, Taipei, 1963, *juan* 9, p. 2b.
  27. Su Shi, "Fu ci fang yu yun da Zhao Chengyi Chen Jiaoshou" ("Again to the rhymes of 'Releasing the Fish', answering the poems of Gentleman for Discussion Zhao and Instructor Chen"). See *Su Shi shiji*, Beijing, 1982, *juan* 34, pp. 1788–90.
  28. Su Shi had originally composed a poem entitled "Releasing the Fish," which referred to his service in Yingzhou in 1092. Commentators believe that this poem, and the one cited, which was written in answer to the rhyming poems of his friends, were composed just before his transfer to Yangzhou. See n. 27.
  29. Published in Kohara Hironobu, ed., *Hachidai sanjin, Bunjinga suihen* series, v. 6, Tokyo, 1977, pl. 16.
  30. Sima Qian, "Xiang Yu benji" ("Biography of Xiang Yu"), *Shi ji*, Beijing, 1972, p. 314.
  31. An example is the poem by Li Shangyin entitled "Huaxia zui" ("Getting drunk under the flowers"). See *Li Shangyin shiji*, *juan* zhong, p. 401.
  32. The story is found in Xin Shi's *San Qin ji*. See Rao Zongyi, "Bada shanren Shishuo shijie jianji qijiazi huaniao ce" ("Interpreting Bada shanren's *Shishuo xinyu* poems and a note on the bird-and-flower album dated to the *jiazi* year"), in Wang Fangyu, ed., *Lunji*, p. 180, n. 19.
  33. Rao Zongyi, "Bada shanren shishuo shijie jianji qijiazi huaniao che" in Wang Fangyu, ed., *Lunji*, pp. 160–81. There are indications that references to the *boxue hongci* examination do appear in Bada's other writings, especially some of the poems in the Princeton album, which is dated to ca. 1682. This is mentioned in Rao's article.
  34. For an excellent study on the Ming loyalists' escape to Buddhist monasteries in southwest China see Chen Yuan, *Mingji Dian Qian fojiaokao* (*A study of Buddhism in Dian and Qian [Yunnan and Guizhou] during the late Ming period*), Beijing, 1959.
  35. See *Kunming xianzhi*, Taipei, 1967, pp. 16–17, and the biography of Zhang Lidao, the Yuan dynasty official who served for many years in Yunnan, in Song Lian, *Yuan shi*, Beijing, 1976, *juan* 167, p. 3916.
  36. Wu Meicun, "Zeng Cangxue" ("Presented to Cangxue"), in *Wu Meicun shiji jianzhu*, Taipei, 1969, *juan* 1, p. 1.
  37. For the biography of Zhu Youlang and the history of the last attempts at restoration see Wang Fuzhi (1619–92), *Yongli shilu*, Changsha, 1982, *juan* 1, pp. 1–19, and Xie Guozhen, *Nan Ming shilue*, Shanghai, 1957, pp. 146–90; see also Arthur W. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644–1912)*, Washington, D.C., 1943–44, pp. 193–95.
  38. There are conflicting reports of the exact date of Emperor Yongli's death. According to Deng Kai, a follower of Emperor



- Yongli in Yunnan, Yongli was killed on the eighth day of the fourth month. See *Yeh shi lu*, in *Ming ji shiliao huibian*, Taipei, 1968, *juan* 18, p. 351. The fifteenth day of the fourth month is recorded in Wen Ruilin's *Nanjiang yishi*. See *Wan Ming shiliao congshu*, Beijing, 1967, *juan* 3, p. 19, and Xu Nai, *Xiaotian jinian* in *Taiwan wenxian congkan*, no. 138, Taipei, 1963, *juan* 20, p. 962. The third date is the twenty-fifth day of the fourth month, which is recorded in Fang Shu's *Jiehui lu*. See *Wan Ming shiliao congshu*, *juan* 5, p. 47. Despite the fact that the exact day of Yongli's death is in question, all sources report it as having taken place in the fourth month of 1662.
39. Wu Meicun, *Wu Meicun*, *juan* 15, pp. 438–41.
40. Called the Building Star, it is a part of the Western constellation Pegasus.
41. Arthur Waley, *The Book of Songs*, New York, 1960, pp. 281–82. "Ding zhi fanzhong," in *Maoshi buzhu*, Taipei, 1970, *juan* 3, pp. 9b–10a.
42. See the reference to the *Maoshi buzhu* in n. 41.
43. Note also that releasing fish, as an act of mercy, is a common Buddhist practice. Hence, its appearance here and suggested association with the Buddhist community at Kunming is particularly appropriate.
44. See Ma Gao, *Zhonghua gujin zhu*, in *Baichuan xuehai*, case 1, *juan* zhong, p. 9a; Li Shizhen, *Bencao gangmu*, Taipei, 1968, *juan* 12, p. 14, and *Sancai tuihui*, p. 2560.
45. See Gheng Yuwen, *Hualü*, in *Shuofu sanzong*, p. 1862.
46. Li Yeshuang, "Bada shanren yu Yunnan Guofeng" ("Bada and Guofeng of Yunnan"), in *Lunji*, pp. 206–7. For biographical information on Guofeng see *Zhongguo meishujia renmin cidian*, Shanghai, 1980, pp. 173–74.
47. The interested reader should note the important efforts Wai-kam Ho has made in interpreting the poems on this scroll. See n. 2.
48. Emperor Yongli's father, Zhu Ghangying, received the title of Guiwang from Emperor Shenzong in 1602. See Wang Fuzhi, *Yongli*, *juan* 1, p. 1. Zhu Youlang was given the same title in early 1646 before he was proclaimed emperor with the reign title Yongli. See Wen Ruilin, *Nanjiang*, p. 19, and Hummel, ed., *Eminent*, p. 194. After Yongli was killed, those who followed him fled to Burma where they settled and called themselves *guijia*, "the Gui family," in memory of the Prince of Gui, Emperor Yongli. Thus, the word *Gui* is of special significance to the Ming loyalists. See Xie Guozhen, *Nan*, p. 190.
- Gangxue 蒼雪  
chang 鯨  
Chu 楚  
Daze 大澤  
Di 狄  
ding 定  
Fan Kui 樊噲  
Guiwang 桂王  
guiyu 鯪魚  
Hsianghaian 香海庵  
huang(a) 黃  
huang(b) 皇  
huangjia 黃頰  
jiangli 將離  
Jinma 金馬  
kelianren 可憐人  
Kunming 昆明  
Li Shang-yin 李商隱  
Liu Bang 劉邦  
Liu Xiaobiao 劉孝標  
Liu Yiqing 劉義慶  
mushaoyao 木芍藥  
pianlian 偏憐  
qiaocui ren 憔悴人  
Qin Shihuangdi 秦始皇帝  
Qu'e 曲阿  
qu ze quan 曲則全  
shi yan zhi 詩言志  
si bumin mu 死不瞑目  
Sima Qian 司馬遷  
Shu Shi 蘇軾  
Tuiweng 退翁  
Wang Wei 王維
- Glossary*
- anwan 安晚  
Bada shanren 八大山人  
Biji 碧雞  
boxue hongci 博學鴻詞

<i>wanxia</i>	晚霞	Yingzhou	穎州
Wei	衛	Yongli	永曆
Wei Cong	韋叢	<i>yu(a)</i>	魚
Wengong	文公	<i>yu(b)</i>	餘
<i>woyou</i>	臥遊	Yuan Zhen	元稹
Wu Meicun	吳梅村	Yunyang	雲陽
Wu Sangui	吳三桂	Yu xi Zizhan rou Lüwu	魚兮子瞻肉驢屋
Xiang Yu	項羽	Zheng Sixiao	鄭思肖
Xie An	謝安	<i>zhi</i>	志
Xie Wan	謝萬	Zhu Youlang	朱由榔
Yangzhou	揚州	Zong Bing	宗炳
<i>yimin</i>	遺民	<i>zuoyou</i>	左右



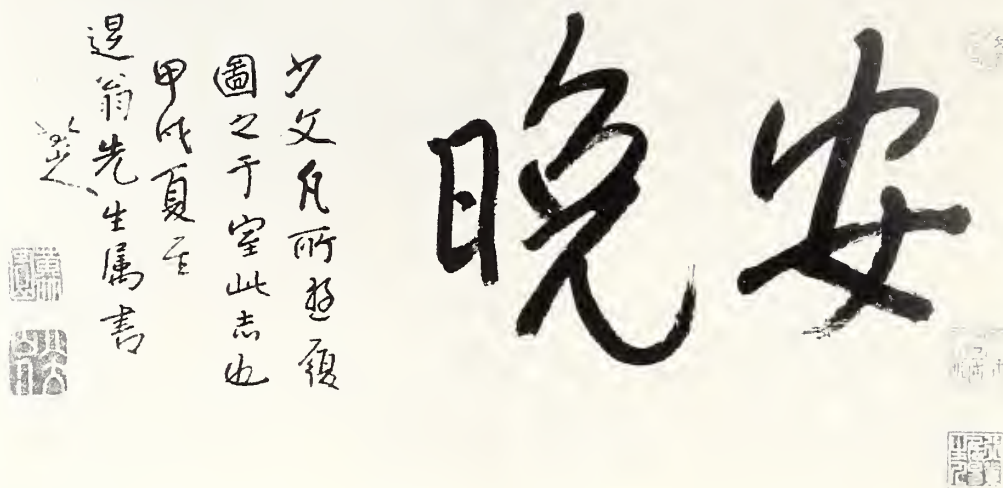


FIG. 1. Bada shanren, "Title Inscription of the Anwan Album," album leaf, ink on paper, 31.7 x 27.5 cm. Sen-oku Hakko Kan (Sumitomo Collection), Kyoto, Japan.



FIG. 2. Bada shanren, "Mandarin Fish," sixth leaf of the Anwan album, ink on paper, 31.7 x 27.5 cm. Sen-oku Hakko Kan (Sumitomo Collection), Kyoto, Japan.

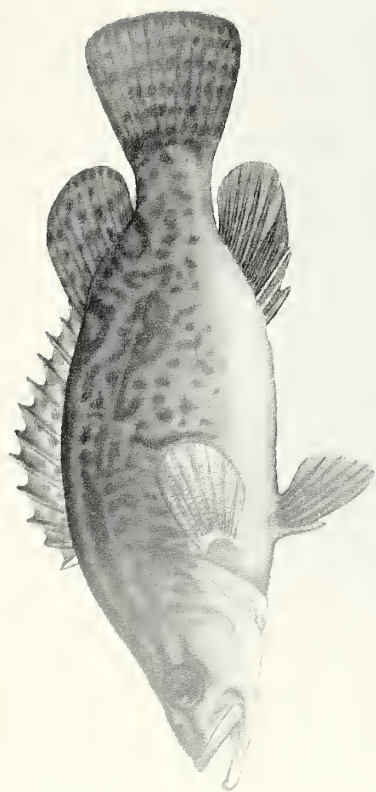


图144 大眼鲈 *Siniperca kneri* German

FIG. 3. "Mandarin Fish" (*Siniperca Chusai* Basilevsky) from *Hunan yulzi zi*, Changsha, 1980, pl. 143.



FIG. 4. Pa-ta Shan-jen, "Fish, Rocks and Chrysanthemums," handscroll, ink on paper, 29.2 x 157.4 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art.



三才圖會卷之五  
魚類  
黃頰魚  
此魚頰部有黃斑  
辛重光之十二月  
望日



FIG. 5. Bada shanren, "Yellow-Cheek Fish," dated 1692, hanging scroll, ink on paper, The Nanjing Museum.



FIG. 6. "Yellow-Cheek Fish," from *Sancai tuhui*, published in 1607.

引此偏懷惟悴之緣  
 之下兩三自今之品  
 和亦芳潔實金之寶  
 芝香月影  
 阿



FIG. 7. Bada shanren, "The Haggard Fish," fifteenth leaf of the Anwan album, ink on paper, 31.7 x 27.5 cm. Sen-oku Hakko Kan (Sumitomo Collection), Kyoto, Japan.





FIG. 8. Bada shanren, "Birds, Fish and Rock," dated the sixteenth day of the fifth month, 1694, hanging scroll, collection unknown. From Wang Zidou, ed., *Bada shanren shuhua ji*, Beijing, 1983, v. 1, p. 120.

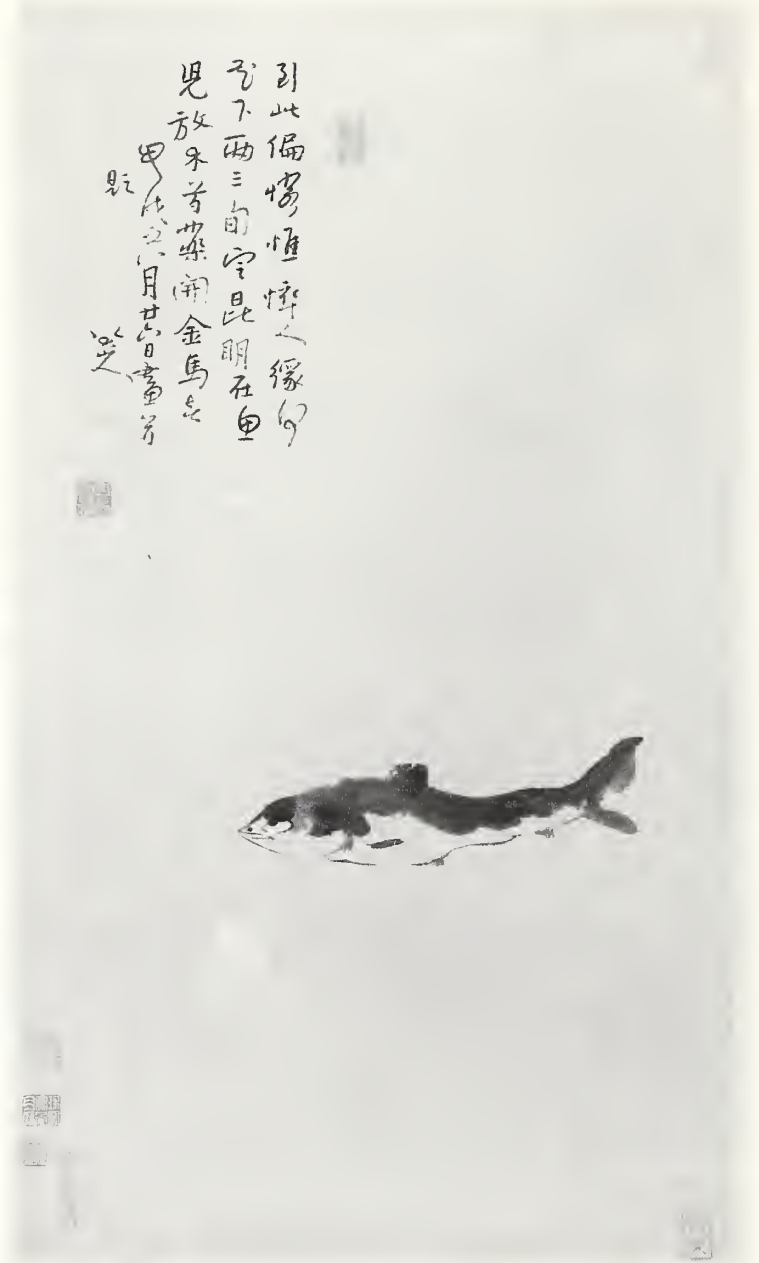


FIG. 9. Bada shanren, "Fish," dated the twenty-sixth day of the eighth month, 1694, hanging scroll, ink on paper, 77.5 x 44 cm. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Wang Fangyu.



FIG. 10. Bada shanren, "Fish," dated summer of 1695, album leaf, ink on paper.  
Mushakoji Saneatsu Memorial Hall, Tokyo, Japan.

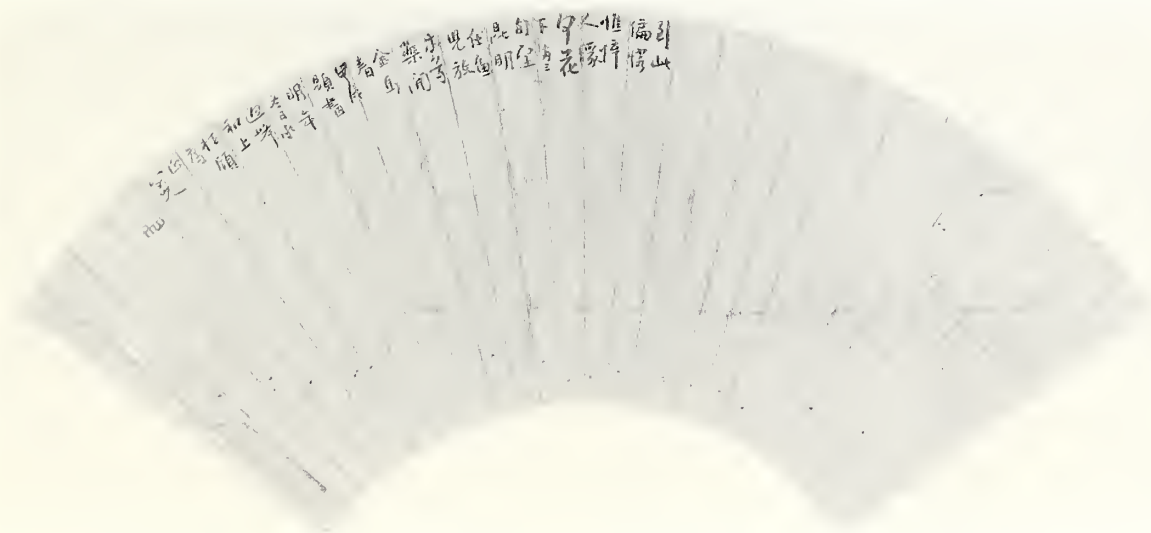


FIG. 11. Bada shanren, "Twenty-four Small Fish," dated winter of 1695, folding fan, ink on paper, 16.6 x 49 cm.  
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Wang Fangyu.





# THE KALINGA TEMPLE FORM

By MARY F. LINDA

ALONG WITH OTHER MAJOR FORMS OF INDIAN TEMPLES SUCH as Nāgara, Drāviḍa, Bhūmija, and Vesara, the Kalinga temple form is noted in an inscription on a temple in Karṇāṭa<sup>1</sup> and in textual sources from west, east, and south India.<sup>2</sup> Although mention of this form with the better known temple forms suggests its significance, the Kalinga temple has rarely been discussed in scholarly literature and has been identified only hesitantly. The twelfth-century south Indian Śivāgama, the *Kāmika*, presents a brief description of the forms of this temple type, but little is discernible from the corrupt Sanskrit text.<sup>3</sup> This dearth of description has not been the only obstacle to identifying this form: Kalinga, as coastal Orissa was known in the third century B.C., is consistently, and incorrectly, assumed to have been centered in Orissa throughout the last two millennia—an assumption that disregards changing political history. As a consequence, the medieval Kalinga temples that remain in present-day northern Andhra Pradesh have not been analyzed in light of the available information.

In 1934 Stella Kramrisch, although aware of the inscriptional references to Kalinga as a distinctive type, identified it as the eastern variety of Nāgara (northern) temples; the monuments of Orissa, which she assumed were Kalinga, did not confirm separation of the two styles.<sup>4</sup> More recently, after analyzing the inscriptions, texts, and reliefs of the major temple types represented by artisans on temples in Karṇāṭa (modern Mysore State, south India), M. A. Dhaky concluded that temples in Orissa most closely matched the Nāgara form as described in the *Kāmikāgama*.<sup>5</sup> After comparing descriptions in texts with reliefs of the Nāgara, Drāviḍa, Bhūmija, and Vesara temples, he tentatively suggested that the only reliefs remaining uncategorized—those with tiered pyramidal roofs (*phāṃsanā*)—might represent Kalinga temples.<sup>6</sup> According to Dhaky, this attribution must remain tentative until the form can be found in Kalinga, which for him, as for Kramrisch, is Orissa.

Several of the reliefs of the Kalinga form that he illustrates depict tall towers of simple horizontal courses that consistently decrease in width to the apex of the tower; this creates a straightedged tower profile, typical of temples in southern India (Fig. 1; Fig. 2, the center and two outer reliefs; and Fig. 3, the second, fourth, and sixth reliefs from the left). The four towers of the twelfth-century Lakṣmīdevī temple at Dodda Gaḍḍavalli, Mysore, are presented as structural counterparts to these reliefs (Fig. 4).

Dhaky correctly asserts that in Orissa, from the tenth century onwards, structures with pyramidal roofs were halls of temples, not the temples themselves (Fig. 25). His observations of the monuments are corroborated by information in the *Bhubanapradīpa*, a *śilpa śāstra* specific to Orissa: a temple with a square ground plan and a tower (*ganḍī*) composed of horizontal courses (*pīḍhas* in the vernacular) “piled up in the form of a pyramid” is known as the *bhadra* type; the *bhadra* temple is specifically called a hall rather than a structure housing a deity.<sup>7</sup> In no instance does the height of these halls approach either the height of the temples to which they are attached or the soaring height depicted in the reliefs; the structures remain squat in proportion to the width of the square base.

As Dhaky points out, the one temple in Orissa that does have a tower of *phāṃsanā* (*pīḍhas*) is the twelfth-century Baskareśvara temple in Bhubanesvar (Fig. 5), but the tower is curvilinear (typical of temples in northern India), in contrast both to the straightedged profile of the Lakṣmīdevī temple at Dodda Gaḍḍavalli (Fig. 4) and to the roofs of halls in Orissa (Fig. 25). Another relief in Karṇāṭa that Dhaky identifies as the Kalinga form does present a curvilinear tower of plain courses with prominent projections on four sides and is similar in conception to the Baskareśvara temple (Fig. 6, center). Despite his reservations, Dhaky had isolated the Kalinga style: it is in fact a curved tower of simple *pīḍhas*, although usually comparable in height to that of Nāgara temples, that distinguishes the Kalinga from the Nāgara temple and from temples with *phāṃsanā* roofs in other parts of India.

This temple form can be identified more precisely by determining exactly where Kalinga was located during the medieval period. This can be ascertained by the find-spots of the copper plate grants of kings who claimed to rule Kalinga. Conversely, the grants by rulers of principalities in Orissa make no mention of Kalinga during this period. This analysis establishes that Kalinga was centered in the Śrīkakulam District of Andhra Pradesh from the late fourth through at least the eleventh century, during the period of style formation.

Twelve temples that remain in this area were constructed from the seventh through the tenth century, and although many characteristics of these temples are shared with traditions north in Orissa, five of the twelve have curvilinear towers (*ganḍī*) of simple *pīḍha* courses. Four were built in the late seventh/early eighth century, and the form was repeated on one



tenth-century temple. With some modifications, the tower type was used on the Baskareśvara temple in Bhubanesvar, Orissa, outside Kalinga, after the early twelfth-century conquest of that northern area by the Later Gaṅga king Anantavarman Chōḍagaṅgā, king of Kalinga. The repetition of so unusual a form over centuries suggests that it was known as a distinctive style; its use outside Kalinga after political conquest by a Kalingan king reiterates its origin in, and association with, northern Andhra Pradesh. The other seven ninth-/tenth-century temples in Kalinga differ slightly from Nāgara temples in Orissa—the result of modifications inspired by the *pīḍha* roof form of the early Kalinga temples.

### *Kalinga*

The first inscriptional reference to Kalinga was in Aśoka's Rock Edict XIII, which describes his devastating conquest of Kalinga in 261 B.C. This edict is not included, however, in the rock edicts carved at Dhauli near Bhubanesvar and at Jaugaḍa near Berhampur in Ganjam District, southern Orissa (Fig. 7).<sup>8</sup> The administrative unit within Kalinga seems to have been called Tosali. The first reference to Kalinga in Orissa proper was in the first century B.C. Hāthigumphā inscription of Khāravela of the Cedi dynasty, at Udayagiri, near Bhubanesvar.<sup>9</sup> In this inscription, he is referred to as king of Kalinga; his capital has been identified with the ruins of Śiśupālgarh, also near Bhubanesvar.<sup>10</sup>

From the first century B.C. until the late fourth- or early fifth-century copper plate grants of the Māṭhara *kula*, there are no references to Kalinga. Engraved copper plates were documents of land transfer containing information such as the name and title of the ruler (who is most often the donor), the name of the dynasty, the date of the grant, the donee's name, and the name and location of the land granted. Since the plates verify legal ownership of land, the places where they are found are assumed to be close to the original land donated. Find-spots of the grants clarify more accurately than verbal assertions in the grants the approximate boundaries of a territory.

Fifteen grants, all found within sixty miles of Śrīkakulam City in northern Andhra Pradesh, are attributed to the Māṭhara dynasty by S. N. Rajaguru, who on paleographic grounds assigns most of the grants to the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. (Fig. 7).<sup>11</sup> Initially, the Māṭhara rulers were only called Mahārāja, or great king, so they must have controlled a limited area; by the time of the last two kings, the title had aggrandized to Sakala-kalinga-adhipati, "supreme ruler of all Kalinga." At this time, one grant specifically

states that Sakalakalinga was the land between the Mahānadī and Kṛṣṇa rivers.<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that even though these sovereigns claimed to "rule" this extensive area, their grants have been found exclusively in northern Andhra Pradesh and Parlakhemundi *taluk*, Orissa (Fig. 8).<sup>13</sup> In reality, they probably only controlled the area in which they made land grants. Any political incursions into territory beyond this area were probably for the appropriation of portable wealth.

Epigraphical records from the second half of the sixth and the early seventh centuries are rare, and the political history of Kalinga remains relatively obscure until the grants of the Early Gaṅga dynasty in the second quarter of the seventh century.<sup>14</sup> Fifty grants, mainly issued from Kalinganagara and dated in the Gaṅga era (from A.D. 626 to A.D. 1023), and fifteen grants issued from Svetaka by a collateral group, dated initially in the Gaṅga era (A.D. 726) and then in an unknown *saṃvat* (probably up to about A.D. 921), are attributed to the Eastern or Early Gaṅga dynasty.<sup>15</sup>

Grants of the collateral Gaṅga branch have been found in Svetaka, located in Ganjam District, south Orissa, but it is questionable whether Svetaka was part of Kalinga (Fig. 8). Although the Svetaka Gaṅga rulers claimed the title "king of Kalinga," as did the Kalinganagara branch, there are several reasons to conclude that they were relatively independent and that the territory they ruled was not part of Kalinga. The first grant was issued by a Rāṇaka (a high feudatory, often a relative) one hundred years after the beginning of the Gaṅga era; this may be an instance of a ruling family establishing a relative elsewhere to maintain a buffer zone between a core area and that of a formidable foe, in this case the Bhauma Karas of central Orissa. This same donor in another grant requested permission from a Bhauma Kara king to donate land in Koṅgoda which included Ganjam District (formerly under, or during the twilight of, Śailodbhava rule).<sup>16</sup> Although this seems to be the only record of such a request, it establishes that the Svetaka Gaṅgas must have been subordinate, even if minimally, to the Bhauma Kara rather than Kalinganagara Gaṅga rulers. Lastly, by the end of the ninth century, one king of the collateral group titled himself "lord of Svetaka," which suggests independence from all external political powers. Whatever the political status of the Svetaka Gaṅgas, no extant temples within their territory can be attributed to their time period.<sup>17</sup>

Of greater import for this discussion are the Early Gaṅgas who issued grants from Kalinganagara. Controversy surrounds the location of this capital: early references link it with the present-day Kalingapatnam on the

coast at the mouth of the Vaniśadhārā River;<sup>18</sup> later evidence suggests that Mukhaliṅgam, inland on the Vaniśadhārā River, was the capital, but this may actually refer solely to the capital of the same name, Kaliṅganagara, of the Later Gaṅgas.<sup>19</sup>

The origins of the Early Gaṅgas remain obscure. The first two rulers called themselves Trikaliṅgādhipati, which probably meant “lord of Trikaliṅga,” the highland west of the Mahendra hills of Ganjam District,<sup>20</sup> rather than “lord of the three Kaliṅgas” (Kaliṅga, Koṅgoda, and Utkala).<sup>21</sup> By the second decade of the eighth century, however, the title had been elevated to Sakalakaliṅgādhipati (ruler of all Kaliṅga), an epithet that became conventionalized in all subsequent Early Gaṅga dynastic eulogies. Mahendra Mountain on the Orissa-Andhra border may have been the northern limit of their territory since they claimed to have worshipped Gokaṇṇeśvara on that mountain; the extent of territory controlled to the south is not clear, but it probably included much of modern Viśakhapatnam District.

The core area of Kaliṅga was the same during the rule of the Early Gaṅgas as during the earlier Māṭhara period: the delta between the Nāgāvalī and Vaniśadhārā rivers. Other grants have been found to the north and to the south in a distribution pattern similar to that of earlier centuries (Fig. 8). There can be no doubt that Kaliṅga was located in northern Viśakhapatnam and Śrīkakulam District, Andhra Pradesh, and in very southern Ganjam District, Orissa, from the late fourth century onwards.

The last known Early Gaṅga grant is dated A.D. 1023. In A.D. 1030, the first ruler of the line that became known as the Later Gaṅgas was declared Trikaliṅgādhipati, suggesting that before that time the Early Gaṅgas had been forced back into the western Orissan hills. The third king in this lineage, Anantavarman Cōḍagaṅga, became one of the greatest rulers in eastern India, eventually unifying central and southern Orissa with Kaliṅga in the twelfth century. His territory was called Sakalotkala (all Utkala) Samrājya, and the capital was moved from Mukhaliṅgam to Jagati on the Mahānadī River in central Orissa.

Brief examination of the land grants found in Orissa from the fifth through the early eleventh century will reveal that most of Orissa was divided into small principalities with very specific names, although not always with exact boundaries or of determinable time periods (Fig. 9). This survey will suffice to indicate that the name Kaliṅga was never associated with any medieval political unit other than the one in northern Andhra Pradesh.

After the Hāthigumphā inscription of Khāravela at Udayagiri near Bhubanesvar in the first century B.C.,

there are no surviving epigraphical records that reveal political history in Orissa until the last half of the sixth century. From then until around A.D. 620, assorted grants by feudatories of Śaśāṅka, minor rulers, and military personnel indicate that the northernmost part of Orissa, into the Midnapur District of Bengal, was called Utkala; land close to the coast, north of the Mahānadī River (Balesore and part of Cuttack District), was known as Uttara Tosalī; and land south of the Mahānadī (part of Cuttack, Puri, and probably north Ganjam District), Dakṣiṇa Tosalī (Fig. 9).<sup>22</sup> There are no historical records for the area north of the Mahānadī River from the early seventh century until the rise of the Bhauma Kara dynasty in A.D. 736.

But approximately from A.D. 620 until 736, the Śailodhava dynasty ruled Koṅgoda, which included Ganjam and most of Puri District, the former Dakṣiṇa Tosalī, from their capital west of Cilka Lake.<sup>23</sup> During the second quarter of the eighth century, the Bhauma Karas eclipsed Śailodbhava sovereignty: their grants record donations of land in Koṅgoda, which was then part of Dakṣiṇa Tosalī. Bhauma Kara hegemony in Ganjam District is also confirmed by the Svetaka Gaṅga grant requesting permission to donate land in Koṅgoda, mentioned above. Other Bhauma Kara grants have been found north of the Mahānadī River up to Jajpur, near their capital, in the area that was still called Uttara Tosalī. This dynasty clearly controlled coastal Orissa from Ganjam to Cuttack District, if not further north, and probably west along the Mahānadī, as indicated by grants found in Baud, Phulbani District.<sup>24</sup> When the Somavamśis of Dakṣiṇa Kośala in western Orissa advanced east to central Orissa in the late tenth century, they obliterated the Bhauma Kara dynasty. Prior to their invasion of central Orissa, the Somavamśis controlled Sambalpur, Sundargarh, and part of Balangir District.

Three other ruling families coexisted, probably as nominal feudatories, with the Bhauma Karas for part of their rule: the Śulkis of Kodālaka, the Tuṅgas of Yamagartta Maṇḍala, and the Bhañjas of Khinjalī. Kodālaka Maṇḍala of the Śulki rulers seems to have encompassed Talcher and Dhenkanal, both in central Dhenkanal District, north of the Mahānadī River. Grants of the Tuṅga rulers have also been found in Dhenkanal District but south of Talcher.<sup>25</sup> During the ninth and tenth centuries, the Khinjalī Bhañjas controlled Phulbani District and the Sonapur subdivision of Balangir District.<sup>26</sup> They were driven into Ganjam District, probably by the Somavamśis, sometime during the tenth century.

In the first half of the tenth century, the Somavamśi kings managed to combine their territory in western Orissa, Dakṣiṇa Kośala, with Dakṣiṇa Tosalī in southern



Orissa; a century later, Uttara Tosali, then known as Utkala, was also annexed. This vast area was administratively divided into Kośala and Utkala. In the twelfth century, the western portion, Kośala, was taken by the Kālacuris, and by about A.D. 1110 Utkala was lost to the great military king of the Later Gaṅgas of Kalinga, Anantavarman Cōḍaḡariga. He claimed to rule all the territory from the Ganges to the Godāvari rivers and to be the sovereign of Sakalotkala Samrājya.<sup>27</sup> Kalinga was one of the divisions within this imperial realm which the Later Gaṅgas continued to rule until the mid fifteenth century.

Again, as in earlier periods, the extent of territory actually controlled may be determined by the location of inscriptions. During Later Gaṅga rule, most donations were recorded in stone on temple walls although copper plates were intermittently issued. Inscriptions of this period remain from the East Godāvari District, Andhra Pradesh, north to the Cuttack District of Orissa; the overwhelming majority of these appear in Andhra Pradesh, from Śrīkakulam District, the Kalinga core area, down to the Godāvari River. Few are found north of the Mahānadi River in Cuttack District; the Later Gaṅga claim to control land up to the Ganges is unsupported.

### *Seventh- and Eighth-Century Kalinga Temples*

Four of the twelve temples that remain in Kalinga were constructed between the mid seventh and very early eighth centuries: the Yuddhiṣṭira (Fig. 10) and Bhīma temples on Mahendra Mountain (mid to late seventh century), on the border between Orissa and Andhra Pradesh; and the Madhukeśvara (Fig. 12) and Bhīmeśvara (Fig. 15) temples at Mukhalingam (ca. 700), inland on the Vaniśadhārā River (Fig. 17).

The Bhīma temple on Mahendra Mountain is only roughly blocked out but enough so to indicate that it would have resembled a smaller version of the nearby Yuddhiṣṭira temple. The Mukhalingam Bhīmeśvara temple was built in at least two, possibly three, stages. The *deul* (temple) is contemporaneous with the nearby Madhukeśvara temple, but the *jaḡamohana* (hall) and *antarāla* were added later, probably in the eleventh century. Either at or after this time, the three images on the *deul* and the two on the *antarāla* were inserted in niches carved into the previously flat walls. These five sculptures vary in size and style, suggesting they were not originally intended as a set for this temple.

All four temples are square in plan. Their walls and towers (*ganḍi*) are *triratha*; that is, they are divided vertically into three parts, with the central third (*rāhā*) projecting slightly from the surface of the

temple. No niches were originally provided for images on the walls of the *deuls*. The *ganḍi* of the Yuddhiṣṭira, Madhukeśvara, and Bhīmeśvara temples consist of horizontal courses (*pīḍhas*), continuous through the central *rāhā* and interrupted only by *candraśālā* motifs at the base of the *rāhā* (Figs. 11, 12, and 16). On the two Mukhalingam temples, these *candraśālās* are filled with figural imagery (Figs. 12 and 16); it is impossible to know what would have been carved on the *rāhās* of the Yuddhiṣṭira temple. Above the *pīḍha* of the tower are the top stone (*skandha*), the circular *beki*, an *āmlāka* (two on the Madhukeśvara), a stone over the *āmlāka* (*khapuri*), and a *kalasa*.

Each *pīḍha* of the Madhukeśvara and Bhīmeśvara *ganḍis* is unembellished except for a continuous plain band at the bottom of each course (Figs. 12 and 16). On the Yuddhiṣṭira tower, however, a series of semicircular forms extends from the top of the band on each *pīḍha*, creating a vertical series from the base to the top of the tower (Fig. 11). Had the tower been completed, it is possible that each of these semicircles would have been carved into a small *candraśālā*—a motif found on the top base molding and on the lowest course of the Madhukeśvara corner shrine towers (Fig. 13). Yet, since all the motifs on the Yuddhiṣṭira are at the same stage, it is equally possible that this semicircular motif, in a slightly more polished form, could have been the intended decoration on the tower. In either case, each *pīḍha* would have remained discrete from the ones above and below, as do the *pīḍhas* of the Mukhalingam temples.

In contrast to the simplicity of the *pīḍha ganḍi* of the three temples discussed above, the towers of the shrines situated at the four corners of the Madhukeśvara hall (*jaḡamohana*, Fig. 13), and those of the compound corner shrines (Fig. 14), are more similar in detail to *rekha* temples, such as the Paraśurāmeśvara temple (ca. A.D. 600, Fig. 24) in Bhubanesvar, north in Orissa, than to the temples with *pīḍha* towers. The walls of the Madhukeśvara corner shrines and those of the Paraśurāmeśvara temple are still *triratha*, but now they have niches for a main and two subsidiary images. The towers are *pañcaratha* (five vertical divisions) and are divided into *bhūmis* (stories) by *āmlākas* in the outer divisions (*kanikas*). The central *rāhā* projecting from the tower maintains the double *candraśālā* motif at the base; above this is a network of smaller *candraśālās*. Courses in the second and fourth vertical divisions (*ānaratha*) are embellished with triple *candraśālās*, and the outer divisions consist of *bhūmis* of four courses each, the top two joined by a *candraśālā* motif.

There are two significant differences, however, between the towers of the corner shrines of the Madhukeśvara temple (Fig. 14) and that of the

Paraśurāmeśvara (Fig. 24). On the Madhukeśvara towers, the second and fourth divisions are separated from the outer divisions only by a narrow recess, while on the Paraśurāmeśvara, small shrines have been included in each *bhūmi* in the deep recess between the outer and inner divisions. Inclusion of the small shrines lends a more sculptural effect to the Paraśurāmeśvara tower, but the absence of miniature shrines on the Kaliṅga temple towers sustains an emphasis on horizontality, evident in the *pīḍha* towers.

Additionally, except for the images in the double *candraśālās* at the base of the *rāhā*, rarely do the Mukhaliṅgam towers have figural imagery; that of the Paraśurāmeśvara is replete with images in the *candraśālās* of the two outer divisions, in the recesses that separate them from the two inner divisions, and above the two *candraśālās* on the central projection (*rāhā*).

Despite these differences, it is only during this period that such a close comparison is possible. After the Madhukeśvara temple was built in about A.D. 700, the Kaliṅga temple form was modified to accommodate characteristics of both *pīḍha* and *rekha* temples. As will be evident from the following discussion, the architectural tradition in Kaliṅga developed slowly, with essentially little innovation through the early tenth century. By the tenth century in Bhubanesvar and contiguous areas, *rekha* temples had developed a complexity of form and achieved a sculptural quality unrealized in Kaliṅga.

### *Ninth- and Tenth-Century Kaliṅga Temples*

Eight temples are extant in Kaliṅga from the late ninth and early tenth centuries: the Dibbeśvara at Sārapalli (Fig. 18), the Rājārājeśvara and Agneśvara at Jayatī (Figs. 19 and 20; fragments of a third temple still exist here), the Someśvara temple at Mukhaliṅgam (Fig. 21), and four temples at Nārāyaṇapuram (Figs. 17 and 22). Of the four Nārāyaṇapuram temples, one is a *pīḍha deul* (Fig. 23), two have towers marked by *āmlāka* in the outer divisions (*rekha*), and the fourth is *khākharā*, a temple with a rectangular floor plan and a barrel vaulted roof. All these late ninth-/early tenth-century temples are unfinished, all have *triratha* walls (three vertical divisions) with niches for images, and, except for the *pīḍha deul* at Nārāyaṇapuram, all have *pañcaratha* towers (five vertical divisions).

The *pañcaratha* towers possess characteristics that indicate modification of the typical (Orissan) *rekha* tower with *pīḍha ganḍi* features: the courses in each *bhūmi* continue on most of the towers even through the central *rāhā*, particularly above the double

*candraśālās* (square and *candraśālā* on the Someśvara temple); the *bhūmis* that are indicated by *āmlākas* in the two outer divisions are reiterated by another *āmlāka* (Fig. 18) or by courses of upturned lotus petals (Fig. 21) on the two inner divisions and next to the central projection, emphasizing horizontality. The separation of the five vertical divisions is only faintly marked by narrow, shallow recesses.

In addition, the triple *candraśālā* motif repeated on the Madhukeśvara corner shrines in the central *rāhā* above the double *candraśālās*, and on each course in the second and fourth divisions (Fig. 14), has been replaced by no more than a single line of *candraśālās* on the Sārapalli (Fig. 18), the two Jayatī temples (Figs. 19 and 20), and the small *rekha* and *khākharā* shrines at Nārāyaṇapuram. Embellishment of the outer *kanika* divisions is consistent with that on the Madhukeśvara corner shrines: the two top courses in each *bhūmi* are joined by a *candraśālā*, but the third course is decorated separately. On the Nīlakaṇṭheśvara temple at Nārāyaṇapuram (Fig. 22), and on the Someśvara temple at Mukhaliṅgam (Fig. 21), both the outer and inner divisions are embellished in the same way: one motif joins two courses and the third is separate. Even if all ornamentation had been completed, the architectural character of the towers would have been preserved: sculpture or reliefs were always diminutive in comparison to the structure itself.

The one exception to this late ninth-/early tenth-century form is the tower of the small south temple at Nārāyaṇapuram (Fig. 23). Similar to the late seventh-/early eighth-century temples, the curvilinear *ganḍi* is *triratha* and consists of *pīḍhas*. As on the Yuddhiṣṭira temple on Mahendra Mountain (Fig. 11), each *pīḍha* is embellished with a series of geometric forms, here triangles rather than semicircles. The triangular forms do not extend from one *pīḍha* to another, so each course remains discrete, as on the earlier temple. In contrast to those early temples, however, the top element of the tower is an *ākāśaliṅga* instead of a *kalasa*, and the temple walls have niches for images, consistent with the other late ninth-/early tenth-century temples. The reappearance after at least two centuries of the *triratha pīḍha ganḍi*, even with modifications, demonstrates that artisans distinguished the *pīḍha ganḍi* from other temple forms.

While the architectural tradition in Kaliṅga evolved conservatively, the parallel tradition in Bhubanesvar, exemplified by the Mukteśvara temple (Fig. 26), developed more dynamically. By the mid tenth century, the five vertical divisions of the tower were coordinated with five wall divisions, the central image niches projected prominently from the temple wall, and a lattice-like network of *candraśālās* covered the second and



fourth tower divisions, the central *rāhā*, and the *ganḍi* of the wall niches. Almost the entire surface of the temple was embellished with figural, floral, or geometric decoration. Also, the small shrines in each *bhūmi* of the tower between the inner and outer divisions were maintained. Through the tenth and in the following centuries, this attention to decorative detail and a dramatic increase in height continued to characterize towers in Bhubanesvar.

The Baskareśvara temple, designated by Dhaky as the Kalinga temple form, was certainly an anomaly within the tradition developing in Bhubanesvar and can only be understood in relation to the earlier temple tower form of Kalinga (Fig. 5). In contrast to the soaring compact towers of the *rekha* temples in Orissa, this curvilinear *pañcaratha ganḍi* is squat and composed of *pīḍhas*. Each *pīḍha* is embellished by triangular motifs, similar to the unfinished forms on Kalinga temple towers (Figs. 18 and 23). Above the *ganḍi* are the familiar circular *beki*, the *āmlāka*, and the *kalasa*. Other characteristics of this temple are typical of temples attributable to the twelfth century: the prominent projection of the central *rāhās* (more pronounced over the west entrance), the base moldings, double tiered niches on *pañcaratha* walls, and the sculptural style of the two remaining central images.<sup>28</sup> As mentioned in the discussion of Kalinga history, the Later Gaṅga king of Kalinga, Anantavarman Cōḍagaṅga, controlled Utkala by A.D. 1110; in all likelihood, this temple was constructed after that with reference to the most significant characteristic of temples in Kalinga: a curvilinear tower of *pīḍhas*. The squatness of the tower, however, suggests that local artisans had no firsthand knowledge of the Kalinga tower form and adapted the Baskareśvara tower from the roofs of halls, which were familiar to them (Fig. 25).

### *Knowledge of the Kalinga Form in Kaṇḍāṭa*

The question that remains is whether the Kaṇḍāṭa artisans understood this to be the Kalinga style. Very likely. Certainly, Kalinga was a political entity recognized in other parts of India from at least the seventh century for it was mentioned in the A.D. 634 Meguti temple inscription at Aihole;<sup>29</sup> it was invaded in the tenth century by the Eastern Cālukyas of Veṅḡ, and in the eleventh century by Rājārāja Cōla of Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu, and by a general of Rājārāja's son Rājendra Cōla.<sup>30</sup> Despite this, by the twelfth century, the Later Gaṅga kings had become powerful military figures controlling extensive territory in eastern India. By historical analogy with other areas of India, it is possible to surmise that their reputations spread

beyond this territory and that the temple form most important to them, at least during the first two centuries of their sovereignty, was also known.

One hundred twenty-nine donatory inscriptions dating to the period of Later Gaṅga supremacy are carved on the walls and pillars of the Madhukeśvara temple hall in Mukhalingam (Fig. 12).<sup>31</sup> The vast majority of these inscriptions, which belong to the twelfth century, reveal that Madhukeśvara was the state deity of the Later Gaṅgas, and the temple was a "kind of legal archive of the state," since the inscriptions record gifts to other temples, to private individuals, and to the god Madhukeśvara.<sup>32</sup>

As mentioned in the political history above, Mukhalingam was the capital of the Later Gaṅgas during this period. But rather than commissioning a new state temple to serve as a focus for unification—as the Cōla king Rājārāja did in Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu, and his son Rājendra I did at Gaṅgaikondācōlapuram<sup>33</sup>—Later Gaṅga kings and their subjects in the eleventh and twelfth centuries patronized already existing temples of local religious significance. Because Madhukeśvara was the state deity and heavily patronized during Later Gaṅga residence there, it is reasonable to conclude that the temple, with its distinctive tower form, was known beyond the boundaries of Kalinga. The existence of the temple at the Later Gaṅga capital may have encouraged specific association of the *pīḍha* tower temple form with the political entity of Kalinga.

While it is very likely that the Kalinga temple form was known outside Kalinga, there are ambiguities in the reliefs on Kaṇḍāṭa temples. Only one, the relief on the Kaṭṭeśvara temple in Hirehaḍagali, Mysore, is clearly close in form to the Kalinga temple as interpreted by artisans in Bhubanesvar: it represents a squat, curvilinear tower of *pīḍhas* with prominent central projections, embellished with a series of triangular forms on each *pīḍha* and topped by an *āmalāka* and *kalasa* (Figs. 5 and 6, center). The artisans of the Kaṭṭeśvara temple either were familiar with texts that described this temple form in more detail than any of the known surviving texts or had visual knowledge of the form. In either case, the relief is interpretative because the Kaṭṭeśvara temple was constructed earlier (ca. A.D. 1057) than the Baskareśvara temple (early twelfth century) and the details do not precisely correspond.

More problematic to explain are reliefs of tall towers of *pīḍhas* with a straightedged profile (Figs. 1 and 2, the center and two outer reliefs). The height of the early Kalinga temples is understood, but one of the other salient characteristics, the curve of the tower, is absent. If in fact these reliefs represent the Kalinga

form, and I think some of them do, artisans must have relied solely on textual descriptions of the form, which they freely interpreted with a prominent southern characteristic, a straightedged tower profile.

The reliefs on the Cennakeśava temple in Maraḷe and on the Mageśvara temple at Mosāle probably do depict the Kaliṅga temple form, however schematically. The Maraḷe reliefs (Fig. 2, center and two outer reliefs) present *pañcaratha* towers with *āmlākās* and *kalasa* on top of the tower—typical of a northern temple and of the temples in Kaliṅga. The Mageśvara relief tower (Fig. 1) is *saptaratha* (seven vertical divisions), but each *ratha* appears to be on a different plane, suggesting that each *phāṃsanā* was not continuous across the face of the tower. The tower, topped by a large *kalasa*, is, however, similar in overall conception to that of the Maraḷe reliefs and more similar to the Kaliṅga temple form than to the other temple forms depicted in relief.

Reliefs on the Trikūṭeśvara temple in Gadag (Fig. 3, reliefs two, four, and six from the left, and probably the others, but in more compressed form), however, may not be depictions of the Kaliṅga temple form. Admittedly, they faithfully represent the top *phāṃsanā* course and bell-shaped *śikhara* of the Lakṣmīdevī temple type (Fig. 4), and Dhaky tentatively suggested that the four towers of the Lakṣmīdevī temple at Dodda Gaḍḍavalli in Mysore were examples of the Kaliṅga temple in southern idiom.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, both the Baskareśvara and Lakṣmīdevī towers are composed of *pīḍhas*. Yet the Baskareśvara tower is curved and topped by a *beki*, *āmalāka*, and *kalasa*, while the

Dodda Gaḍḍavalli towers are straightedged and topped above the *phāṃsanā* by a bell-shaped *śikhara* and well-developed *kalasa*. Although artisans were probably aware of temple forms outside their own area—whether through texts, verbal descriptions, or visual observation—there is no reason to believe that a structural temple as large as the multi-shrined Lakṣmīdevī temple would have been constructed in a form (even if translated into southern idiom) associated with an area so distant from Karṇāṭa. Temples with towers of *pīḍhas* (or *phāṃsanā*) are found in Karṇāṭa and throughout India. Therefore, not all temples with *phāṃsanā* towers need be Kaliṅga temples, nor do all the representations of *phāṃsanā* towers on Karṇāṭa temples necessarily depict the Kaliṅga tower.

An inscription on the Lakṣmīdevī temple states that the temple was built by the merchant Kullchaṇa-Rāhuta and his wife Sahajādēvi in A.D. 1113, during the reign of the Hoysaḷa king Viṣṇu.<sup>35</sup> They founded a village to support the temple, and the merchant later gave a monetary donation for the goddess. There is no indication in this inscription, nor any other evidence, of prolonged or significant political or cultural intercourse between Kaliṅga on the central east coast and Karṇāṭa in south India. It would in fact be extraordinary for an architect working in a local or regional tradition consciously to construct a temple close in form to another tradition. Artisans of the Trikūṭeśvara temple in Gadag (Fig. 9) were probably depicting a local temple form, typified by the Lakṣmīdevī temple, that developed in Karṇāṭa independently from the Kaliṅga temple form.



## Notes

I would like to thank the Archaeological Survey of India for permission to photograph the monuments included in this article as well as the American Institute of Indian Studies for graciously providing several photographs. All figures are by the author unless otherwise indicated.

1. M. A. Dhaky, *The Indian Temple Forms in Karmāṭa Inscriptions and Architecture*, New Delhi, 1977, p. 1.
2. The twelfth-century *Aparājitapṛcchā* of Bhuvandeva, western India; the *Lakṣaṇasamuccaya* of Vairocana, an eleventh-through thirteenth-century eastern India āgama; and the twelfth-century south Indian āgama, the *Kāmika*. Cited by Dhaky, *Indian Temple*, p. 36.
3. Dhaky, *Indian Temple*, p. 50, n. 66.
4. Stella Kramrisch, "Kalinga Temples," *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, v. 2, no. 1, 1934, pp. 43–44 and p. 43, n. 3.
5. Dhaky, *Indian Temple*, p. 9.
6. Dhaky, *Indian Temple*, pp. 36–37.
7. Nirmal Kumar Bose, *Canons of Orissan Architecture*, New Delhi, 1982, pp. 78–79 and sections XVI and XVII.
8. Radhagovinda Basak, *Aśokan Inscriptions*, Calcutta, 1959, pp. xi–xii and 63–76.
9. K. G. Sankara Aiyar, "The Hāthigumphā Cave Inscription of Khāravela," *Indian Antiquary*, v. 49, 1920, pp. 43–52.
10. Debala Mitra, *Bhubanesvar*, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 4–6.
11. S. N. Rajaguru, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, v. 1, pt. ii, Bhubanesvar, 1958, pp. 1–82.
12. Rajaguru, *Inscriptions*, p. 46.
13. A more extended discussion of settlement patterns in Kalinga may be found in M. F. Linda, "Temples of Stone, Centers of Culture: Sacred Space in Medieval Kalinga," in *Studies in the History of Art*, v. 31: *Urban Form and Meaning in South Asia*, ed. Howard Spodek and Doris Srinivasan, Washington, D.C., forthcoming 1991.
14. The Mātharas seem to have been overshadowed by rulers of the Śrī Kāśyapa gotra, who had no major or lasting impact on Kalinga history. Their grants may be found in Rajaguru, *Inscriptions*, pp. 48 and 63. There are also two ambiguous references to Kalinga between Māthara and Early Gaṇiga hegemony. Kalinga-rāṣṭra is referred to in one grant of southern Orissa, but it is not clear whether this is the Kalinga of the Mātharas or another smaller territorial unit. See D. C. Sircar, "Sumaṇḍala Plates of the Time of Prthivivigrahābhatarāka: Gupta Year 250," *Epigraphica Indica*, v. 28, n.d., pp. 79–85. One Śailodbhava ruler of southern Orissa claims to be Sakala-Kalinga-adhipati, which may indicate a temporary intrusion into Kalinga from Orissa. See Rajaguru, *Inscriptions*, pp. 157–61.
15. For the Kalinganagara branch, see Rajaguru, *Inscriptions*, v. 2, pp. 1–232, and S. N. Rajaguru, *History of the Gangas*, pt. 1, Bhubanesvar, 1968, pp. 71–152; for the Svetaka branch, *Inscriptions*, v. 2, pp. 243–312, and *History*, pp. 156–76.
16. Rajaguru, *Inscriptions*, v. 2, pp. 258–63.
17. There are temples at Punjiyama and Borogaon, but I would assign them to the period of Śailodbhava hegemony.
18. B. C. Bhattacharya, "Kalinganagara and Excavation at Its Present Site," *Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, v. 15, 1929, pp. 623–34.
19. G. V. Ramamurti, "Nadgam Plates of Vajrabasta: Śāka Saṁvat 979," *Epigraphia Indica*, v. 4, 1896–97, p. 192, and B. V. Krishna Rao, "On the Identification of Kalinganagara," *JBORS*, v. 15, 1929, pp. 105–15.
20. G. Ramdas, "Tri-Kalinga Country," *JBORS*, v. 14, pt. 4, 1928, pp. 539–47, and G. Ramdas, "Tri-Kalinga Country," *JBORS*, v. 15, 1929, pp. 635–42.
21. Binayak Misra, "The Tri-Kalinga Country," *JBORS*, v. 14, pt. 1, 1928, p. 145.
22. Rajaguru, *Inscriptions*, v. 1, pt. ii, pp. 113–56.
23. For Śailodbhava inscriptions, see Rajaguru, *Inscriptions*, v. 1, pt. ii, pp. 157–252.
24. The Bhauma Kara grants have yet to be catalogued in any single place. A list is provided in Thomas Donaldson, *Hindu Temple Art of Orissa*, v. 1, Leiden, 1985, p. 1198.
25. K. C. Panigrahi, *History of Orissa*, Cuttack, 1981, pp. 144–45.
26. Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions*, v. 6, Bhubanesvar, 1974, pp. 51–258.
27. Nabin Kumar Sahu, "Historical Geography," in *History and Culture of Orissa*, ed. M. N. Das, Cuttack, 1977, p. 40; and James Fleet, "Vizagapatnam Grant of Anantavarman Cōḍagarigadeva, Śāka 1040," *Indian Antiquary*, 1889, pp. 165–72.
28. Donaldson, *Hindu*, pp. 400–1, dates this temple to the twelfth century.
29. *Epigraphica Indica*, v. 6, 1896, p. 11.
30. Rajaguru, *History*, pt. I, pp. 129–34, and S. N. Rajaguru, "Two Copper Plate Inscriptions of the Early Gaṇiga Kings of Kalinga," *JBORS*, v. 35, pts. I and II, 1949, pp. 1–27. For the Cōla invasions of Kalinga see Rajaguru, *Inscriptions*, v. 2, p. 358, and B. Masthanaiah, *The Temples of Mukhalīngam*, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 16–17.
31. Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series, *South Indian Inscriptions*, v. 5, nos. 1005–1134. Most are also catalogued by Rajaguru, *Inscriptions*, v. 3, pts. i and ii, Bhubanesvar, 1960–61.
32. H. v. Stietencron, "The Advent of Visnuism in Orissa," in *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, ed. A. Eschmann, H. Kulke, and G. C. Tripathi, New Delhi,

- 1978, p. 23.
33. *Encyclopedia of Indian Temple Architecture*, South India, Lower Dravidesa, v. 1, pt. I, ed. Michael W. Meister, New Delhi, 1983, p. 234–47, and H. Kulke, “Royal Temple Policy and the Structure of Medieval Hindu Kingdoms,” in *Cult*, pp. 135–37.
34. Dhaky, *Indian Temple*, p. 55, n. 46.
35. R. Narasimhachar, *The Lakshmi Devi Temple at Doddagaddavalli, Mysore Archaeological Series, Architecture and Sculpture in Mysore*, v. 3, Bangalore, 1919, pp. 1 and 5.



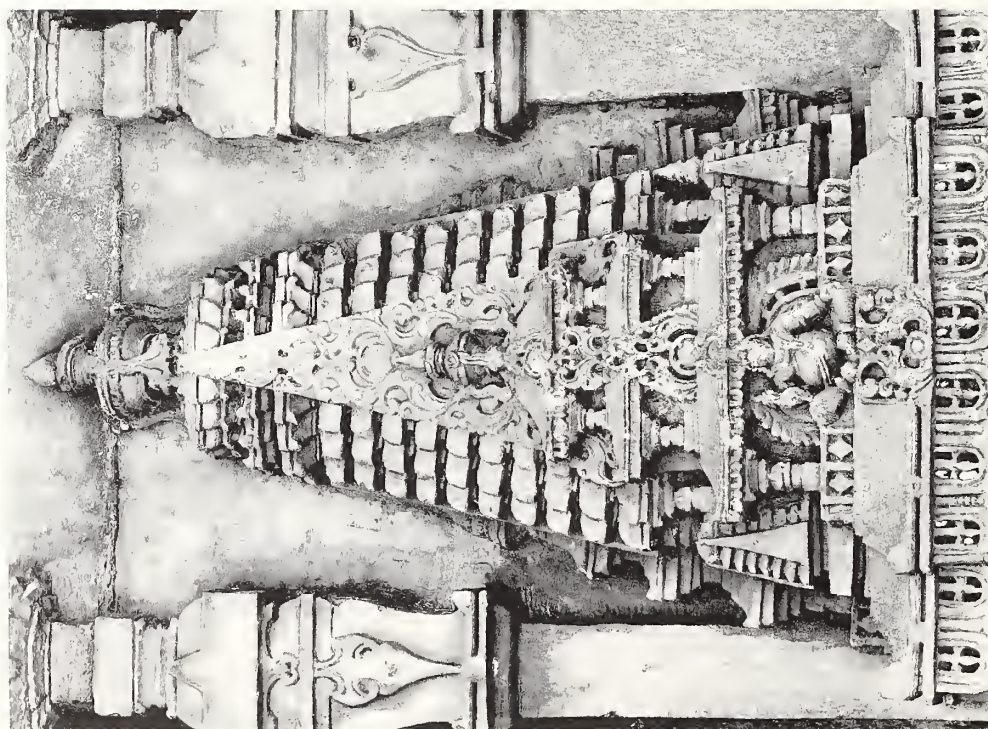


FIG. 1. North wall, Mageśvara temple, Mosāle, Hassan District, Mysore, *ca.* A.D. 1250. Courtesy of the American Institute of Indian Studies.

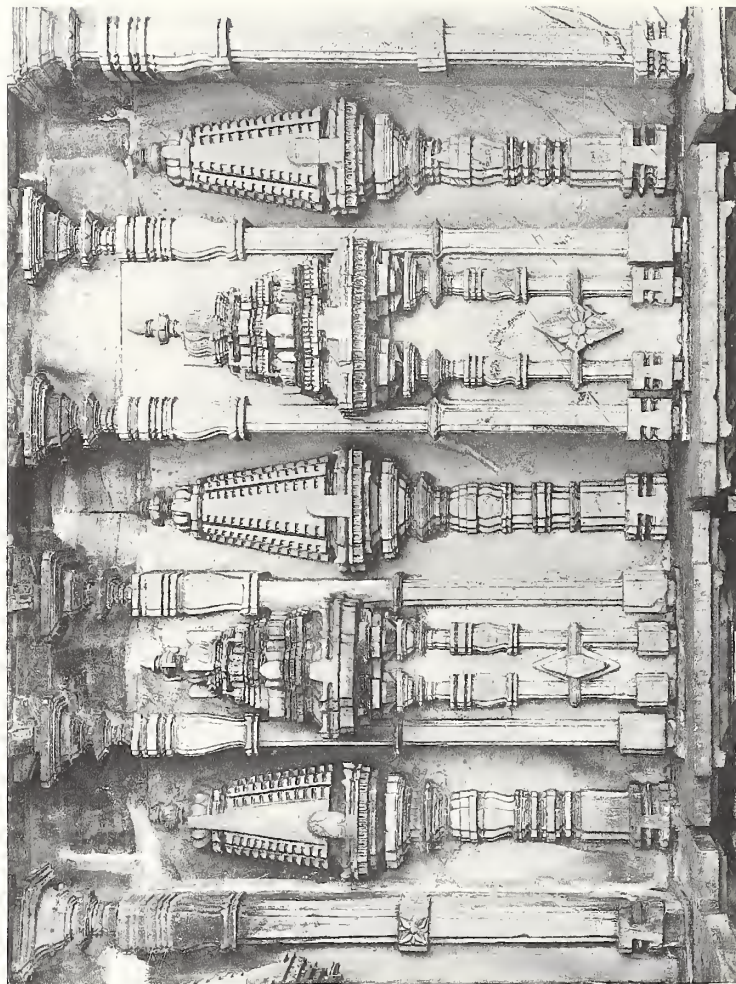


FIG. 2. North wall, Cennakesvara temple, Marale, Chikmagalur District, Mysore, *ca.* A.D. 1130. Courtesy of the American Institute of Indian Studies.



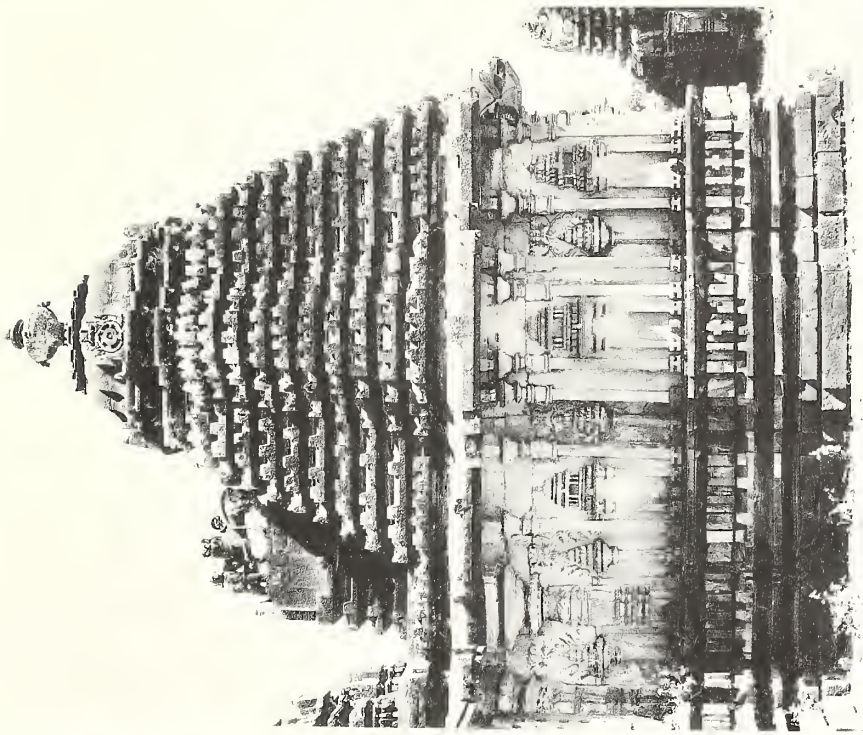


FIG. 4. Bhairava or Viṣṇu shrine, Lakṣmidevī temple, Doddagaddavalli, Hassan District, Mysore, A.D. 1113. Courtesy of the American Institute of Indian Studies

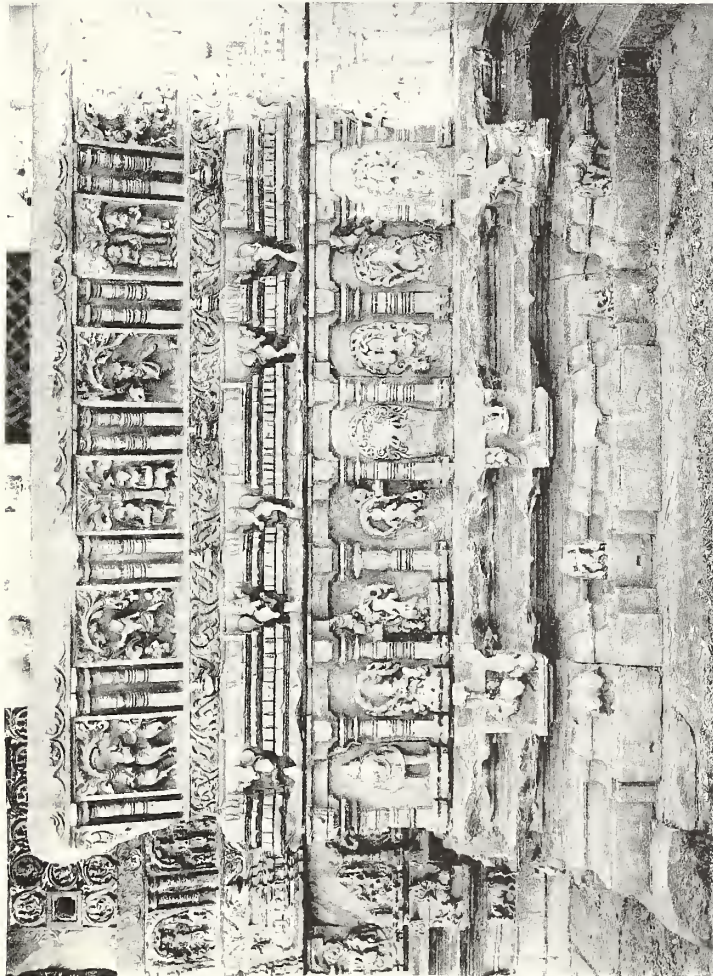


FIG. 3. North wall, Trikuṭeśvara temple, Gadag, Dharwar District, Mysore, eleventh century. Courtesy of the American Institute of Indian Studies





FIG. 5. Baskareśvara temple, from the south, Bhubaneswar, Puri District, Orissa, *ca.* early twelfth century.  
Courtesy of the American Institute of Indian Studies.

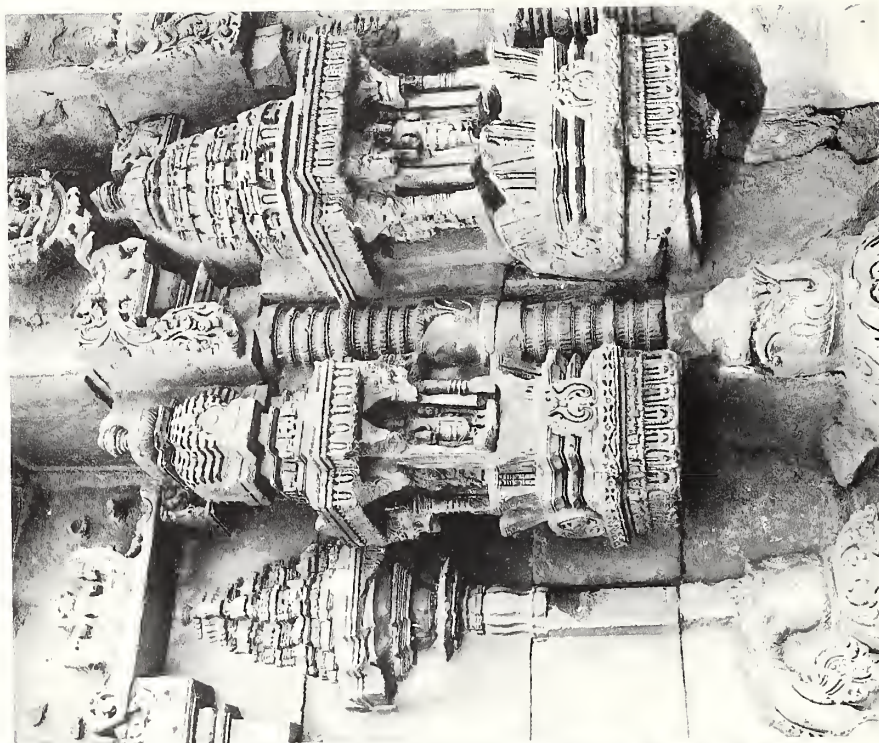


FIG. 6. South wall, Kaṭṭeśvara temple, Hiraḥadagalli, Bellary District, Mysore,  
late eleventh century. Courtesy of the American Institute of Indian Studies.



FIG. 7. Map of modern Orissa and northern Andhra Pradesh.



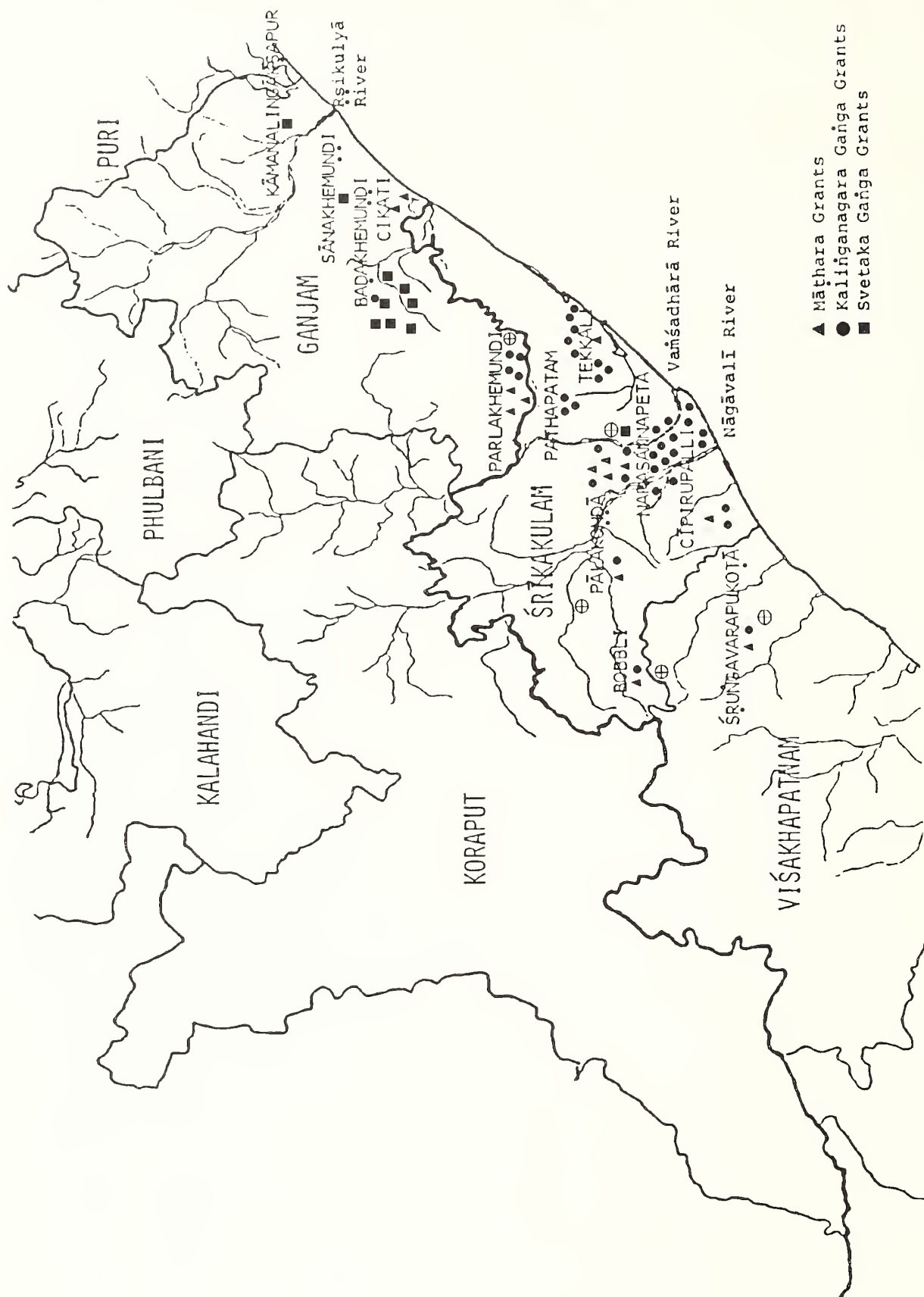


Fig. 8. Copper plate find-spots.



FIG. 9. Medieval principalities.





FIG. 10. Yuddhiṣṭira temple, Mahendra Mountain,  
Ganjam District, Orissa, late sixth century.



FIG. 11. Detail of *gandī*, Yuddhiṣṭira temple, Mahendra Mountain.





FIG. 12. East side of the *gandi*, Madhukeshvara temple, Mukhalingam, Śrīkakulam District, Andhra Pradesh, ca. A.D. 700.



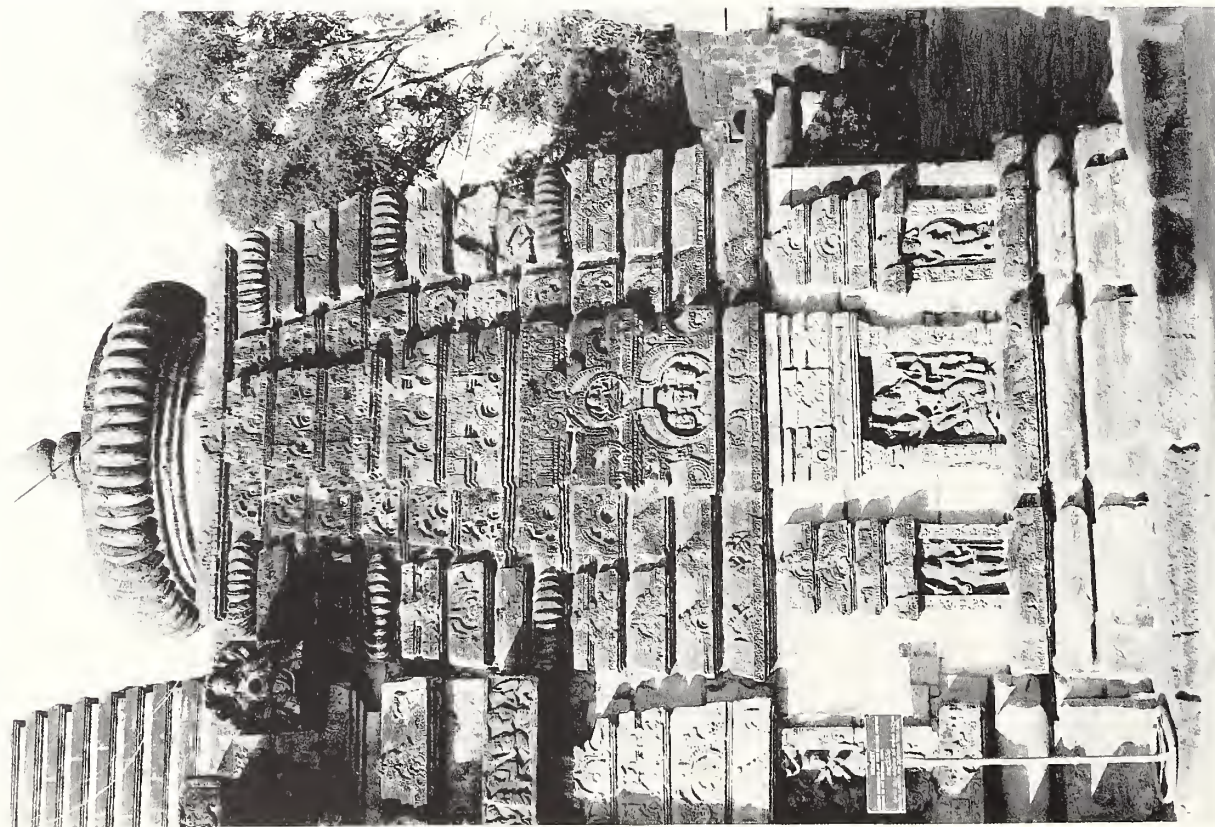


FIG. 13. Façade of *jagamohana* corner shrine, Madhukeshvara temple, Mukhalingam.

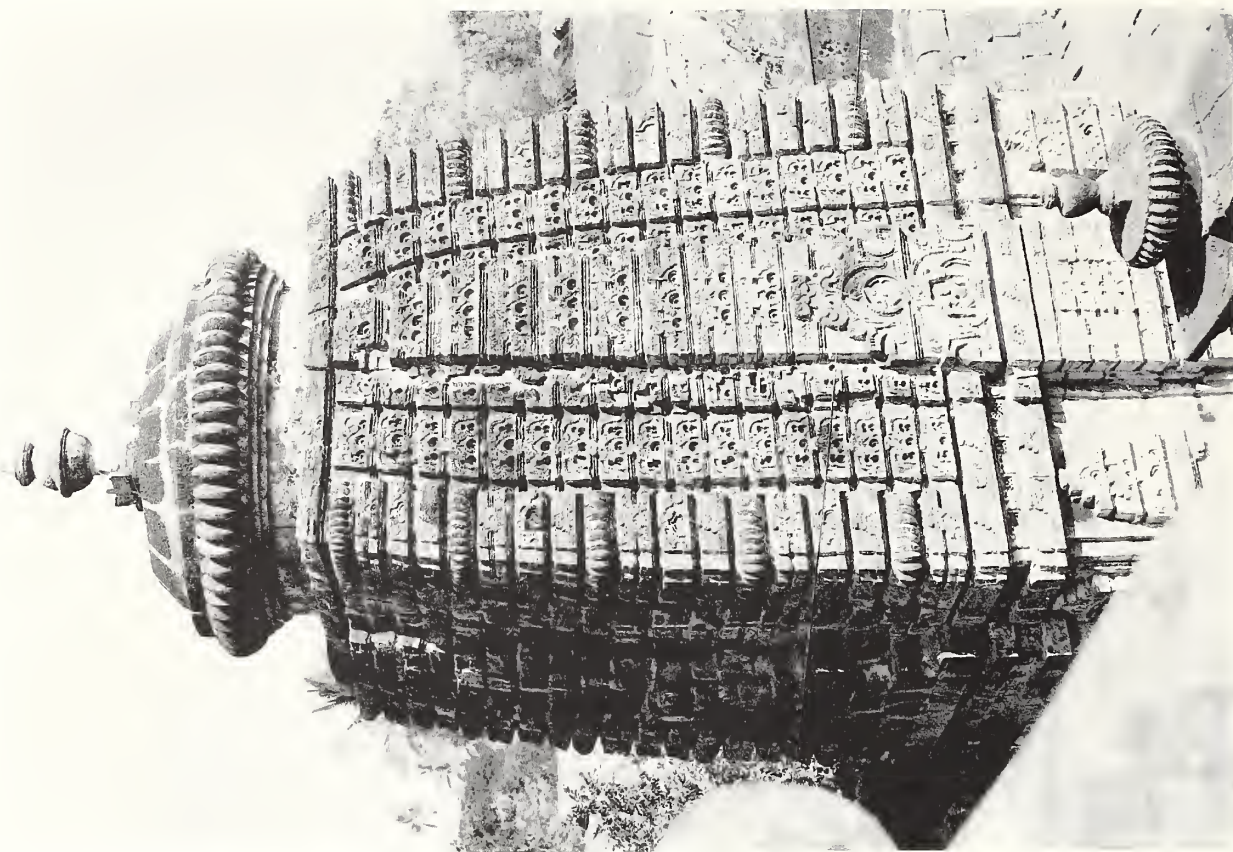


FIG. 14. Northeast compound corner shrine, Madhukeshvara temple, Mukhalingam.



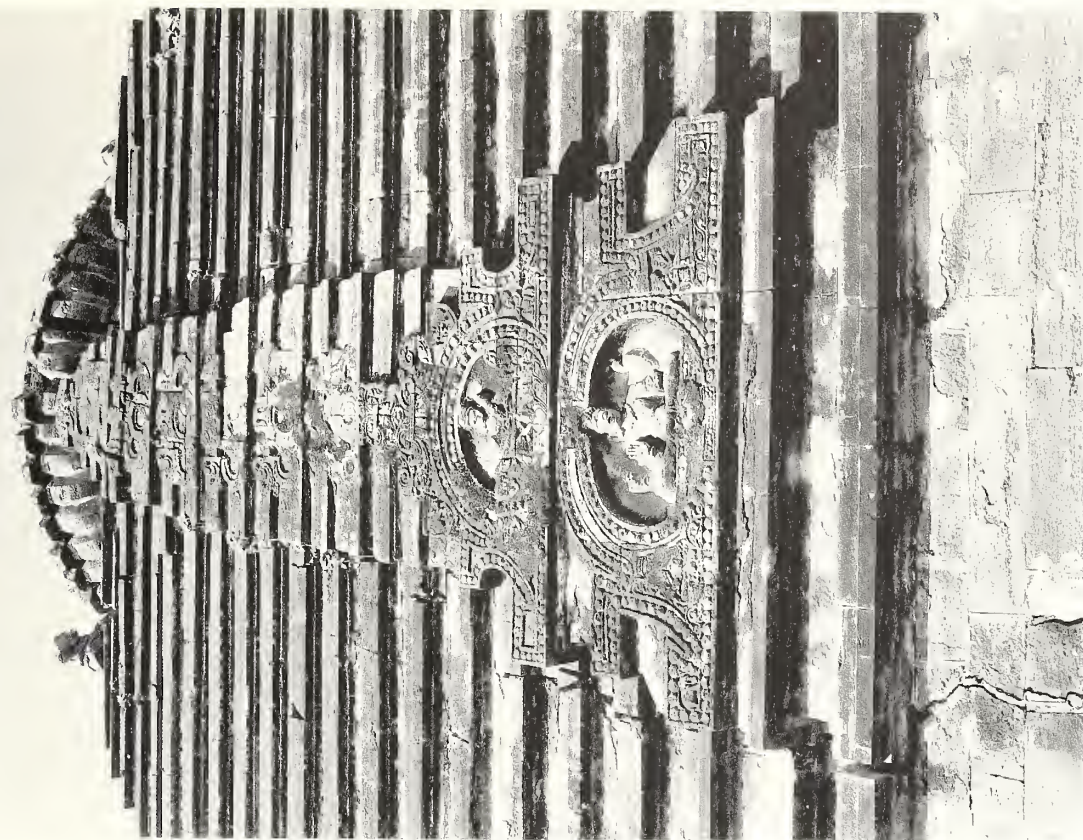


FIG. 16. Detail of *ganai*, Bhīmeśvara temple, Mukhalingam.

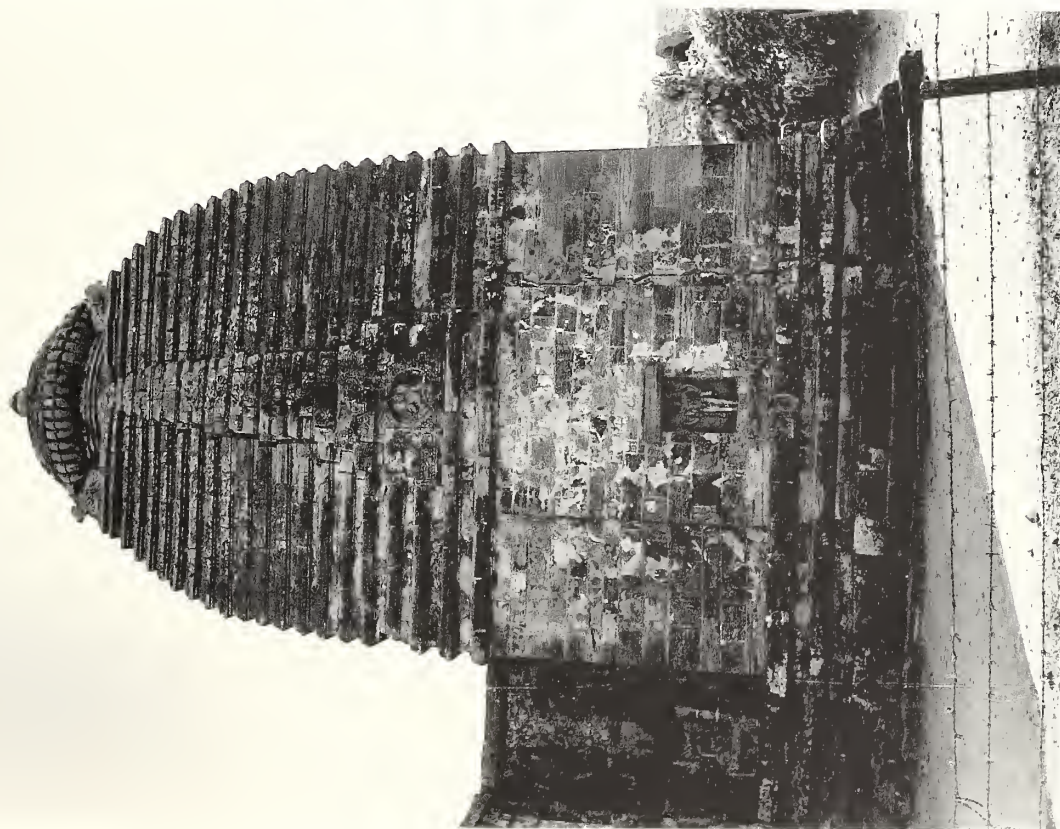


FIG. 15. *Deul*, Bhīmeśvara temple, Mukhalingam, Śrīkakulam District, Andhra Pradesh, ca. A.D. 700.



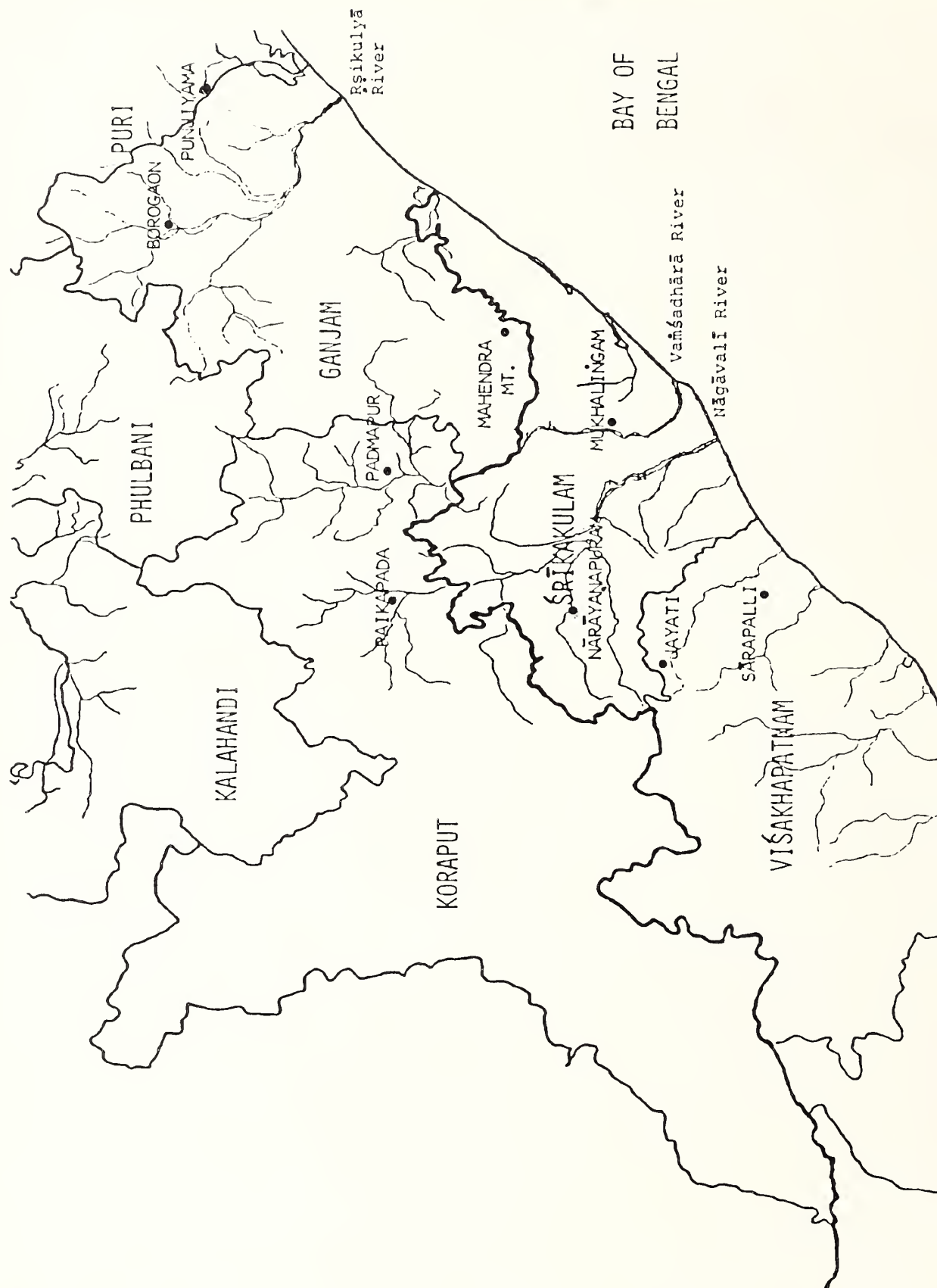


Fig. 17. Temple sites in Kalinga.



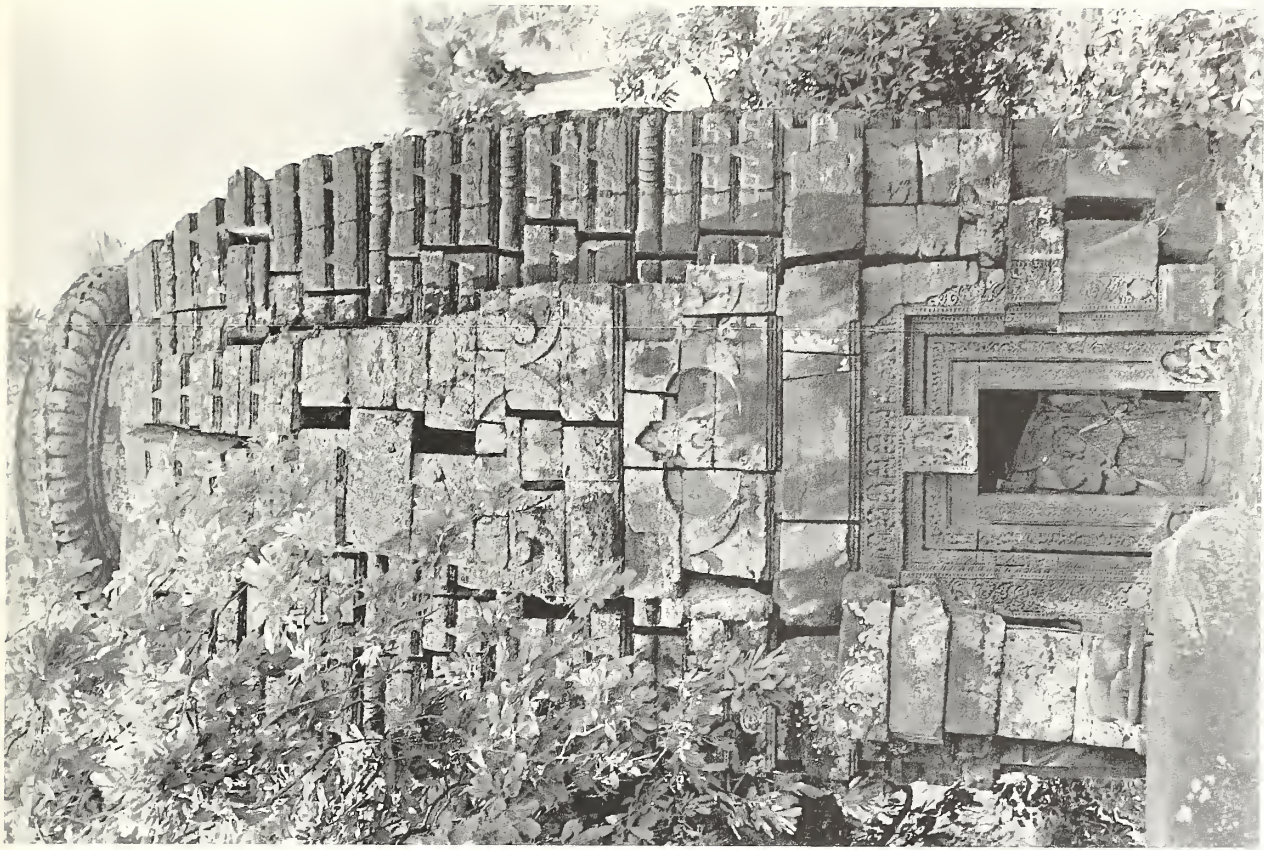


FIG. 19. East side, Rājārjaveśvara temple, Jayai, Visakhapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh, late ninth century.

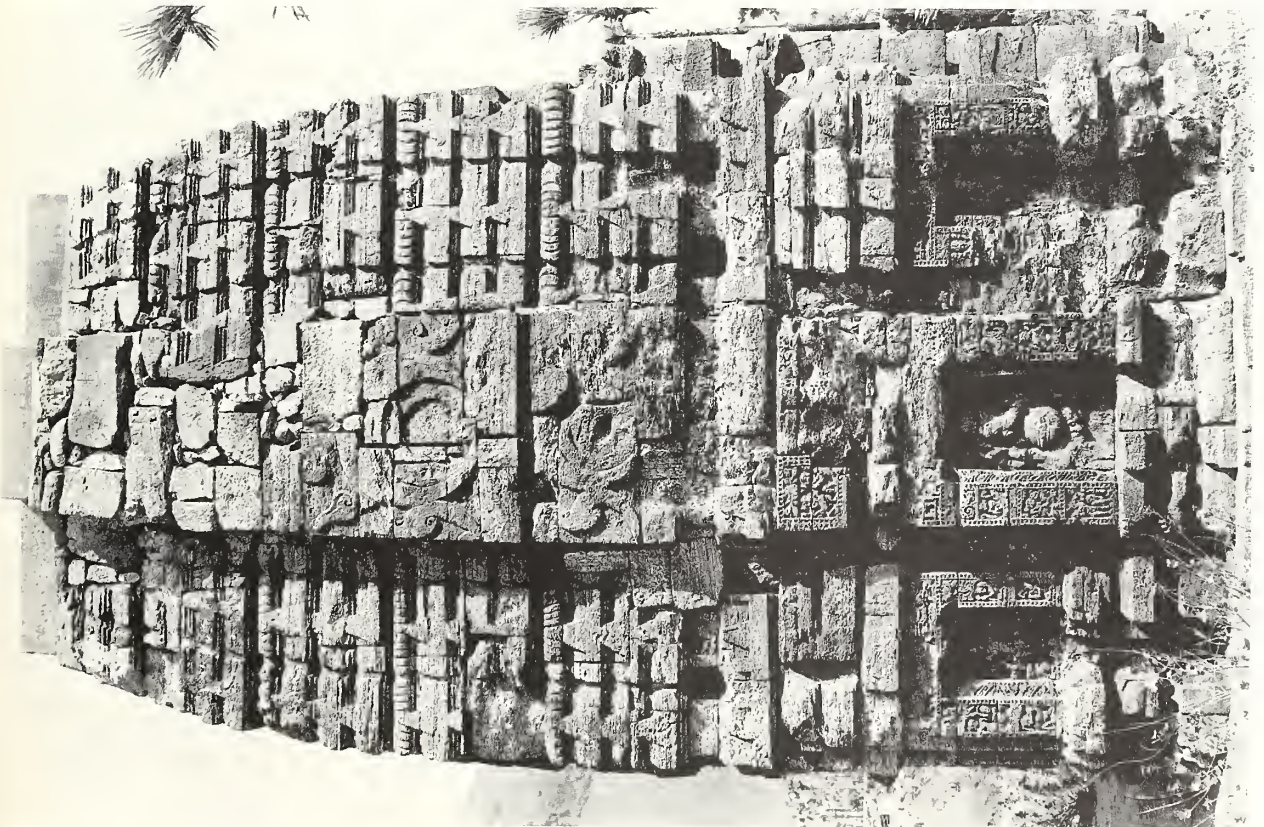


FIG. 18. South side, Dibbesvara temple, Sārapalli, Visakhapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh, mid ninth century.



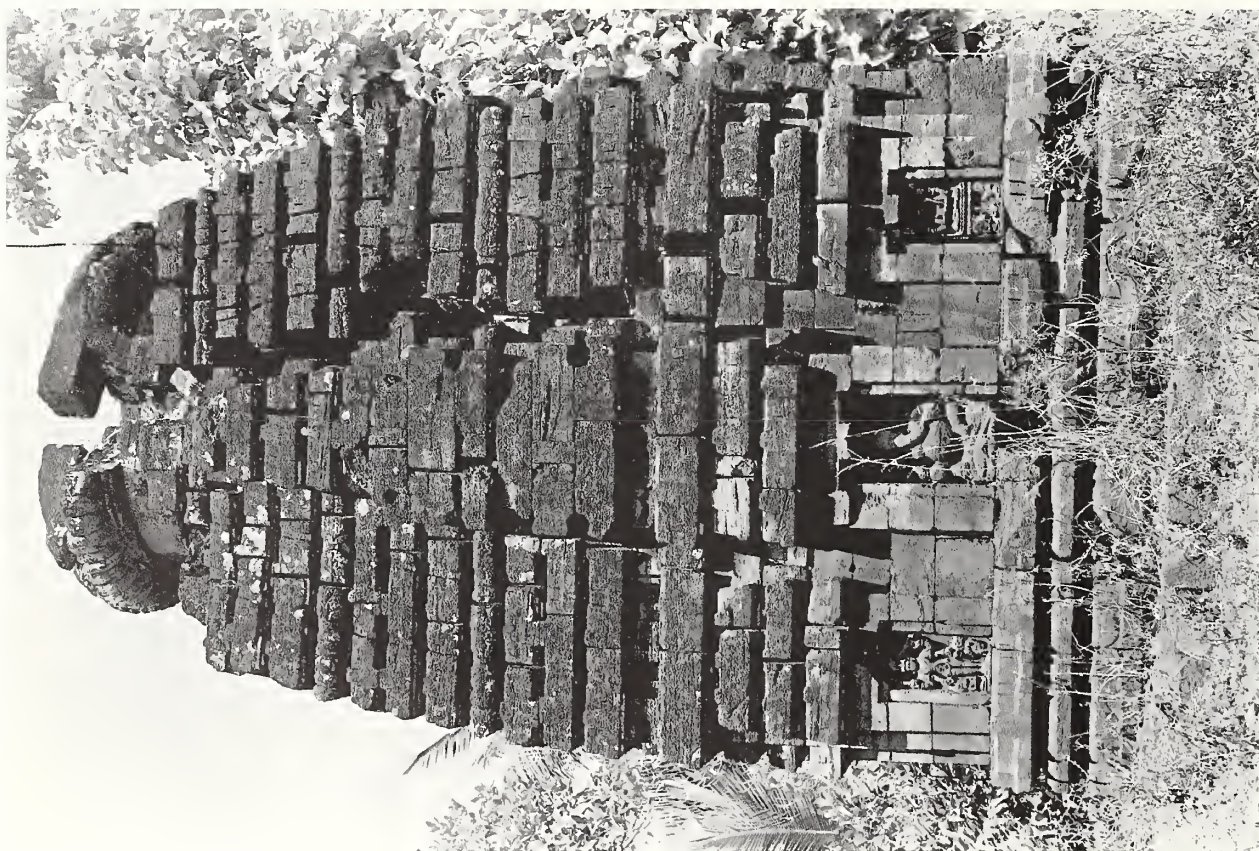


FIG. 20. South side, Agnesvara temple, Jayati, Visakhapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh, late ninth century.

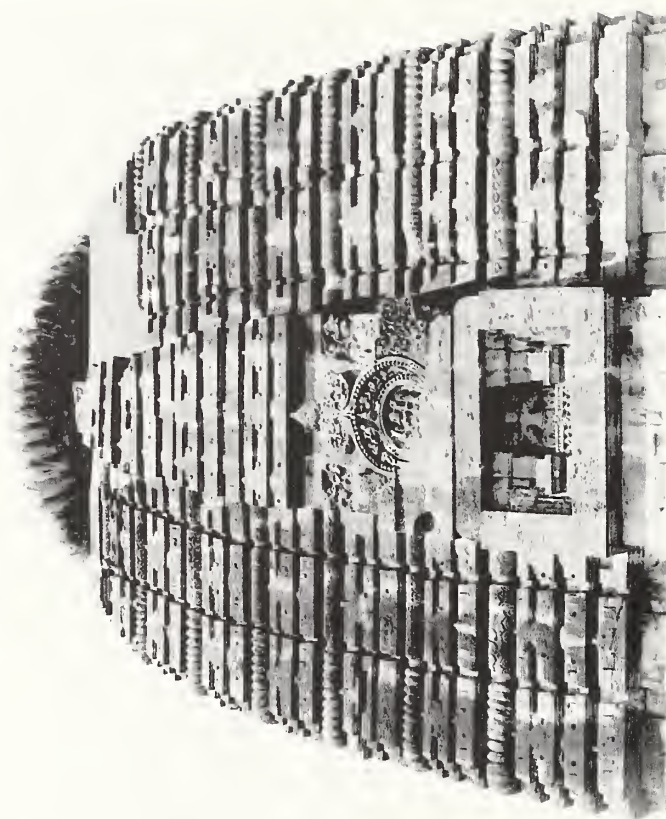


FIG. 21. Detail of *garbi*, Someśvara temple, Mukhalingam, Srikakulam District, Andhra Pradesh, early tenth century.





FIG. 22. South side, Nīlakaṇṭheśvara temple, Nārāyaṇapuram, Viśakhapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh, early tenth century.



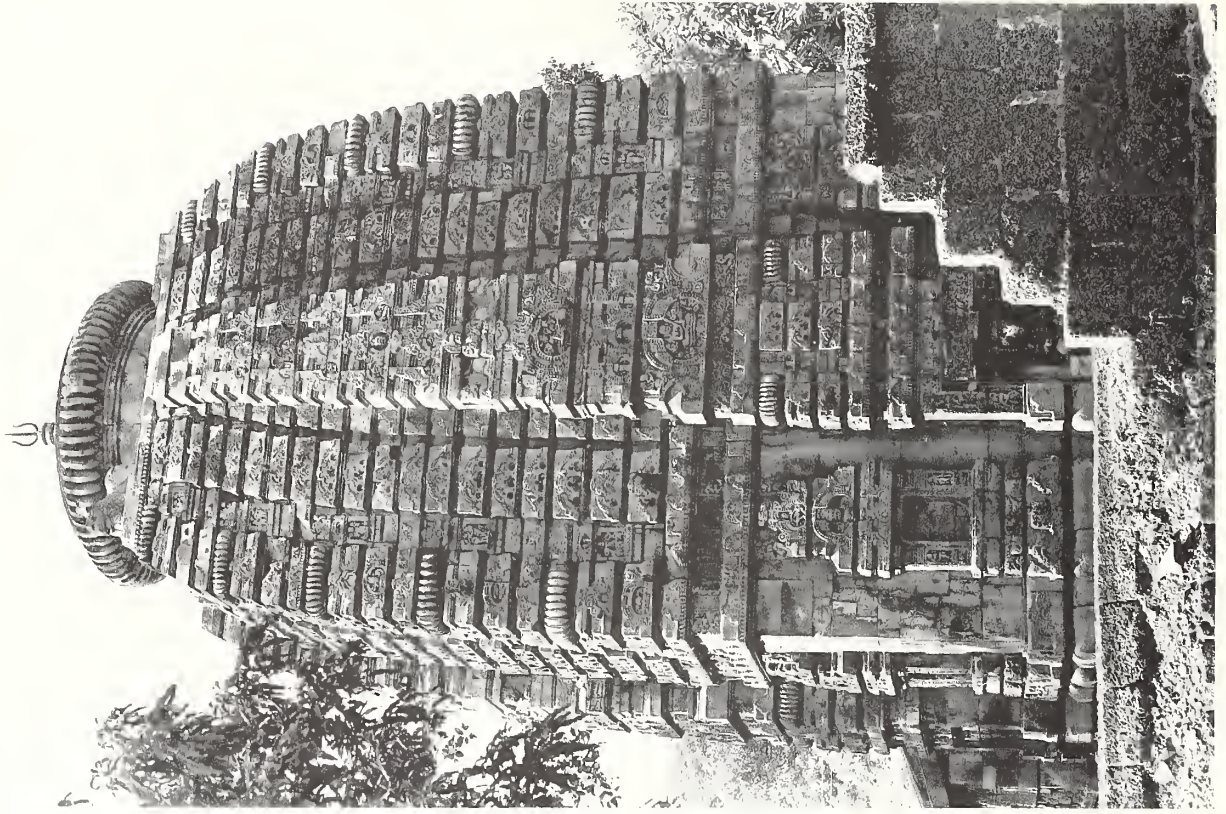


FIG. 24. East side, Parasurāmesvara temple, Bhubanesvar,  
Puri District, Orissa, ca. A.D. 600.

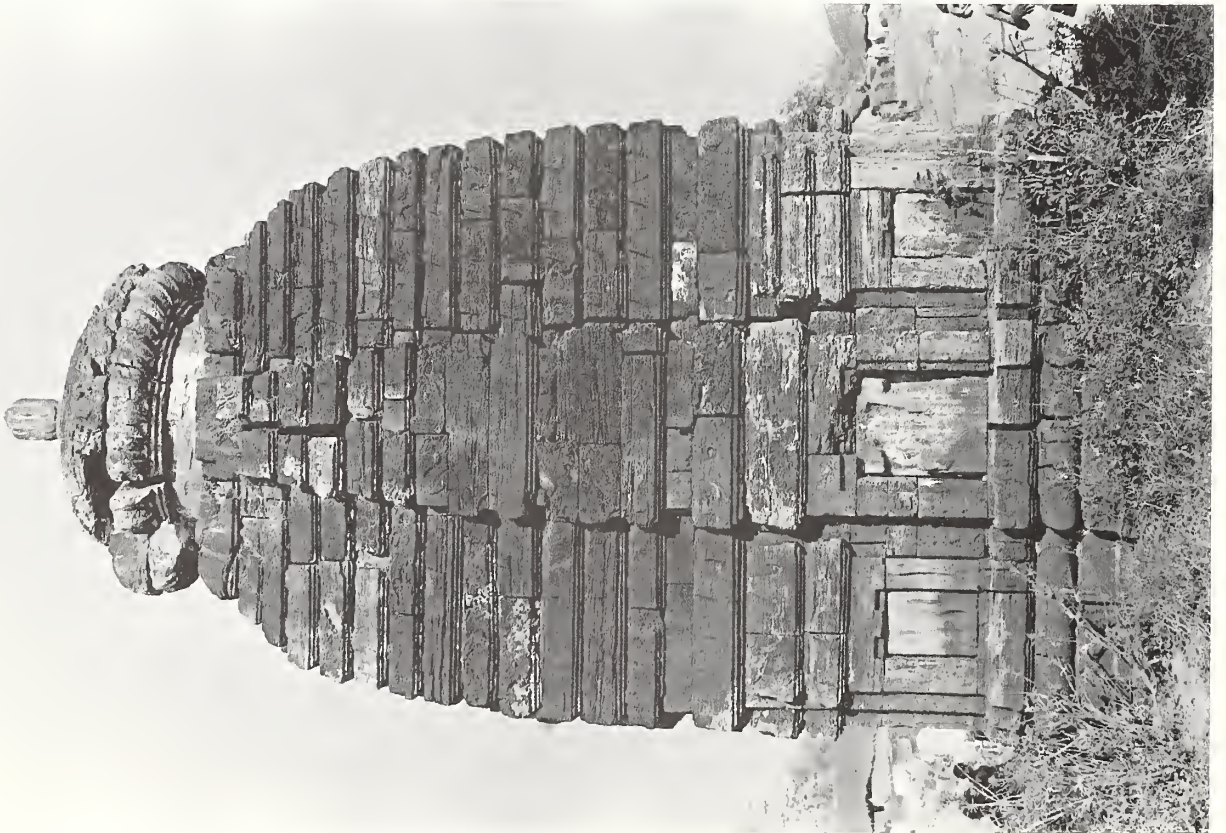


FIG. 23. West side, South temple, Nārāyaṇapuram.



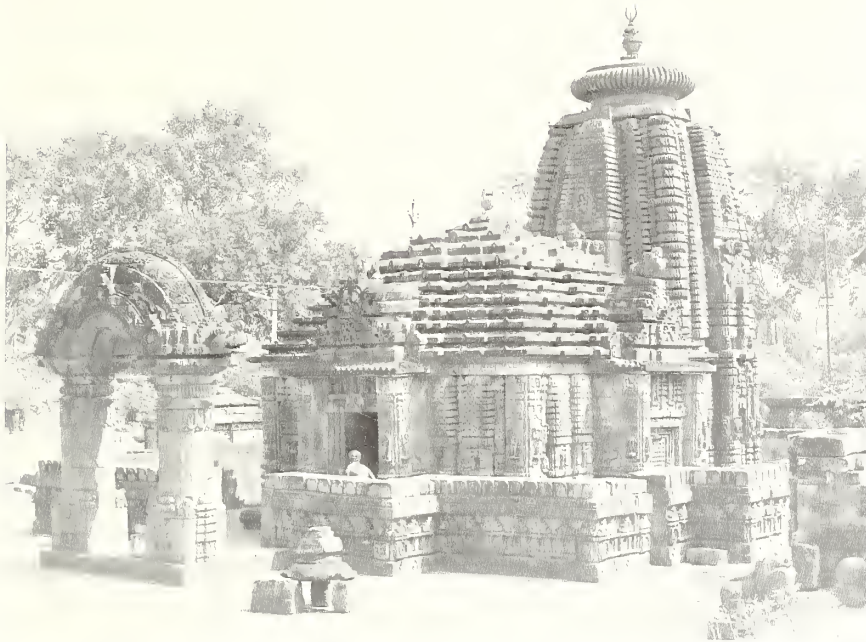


FIG. 25. Muktesvara temple from the southwest, Bhubanesvar, Puri District, Orissa, *ca.* mid tenth century.

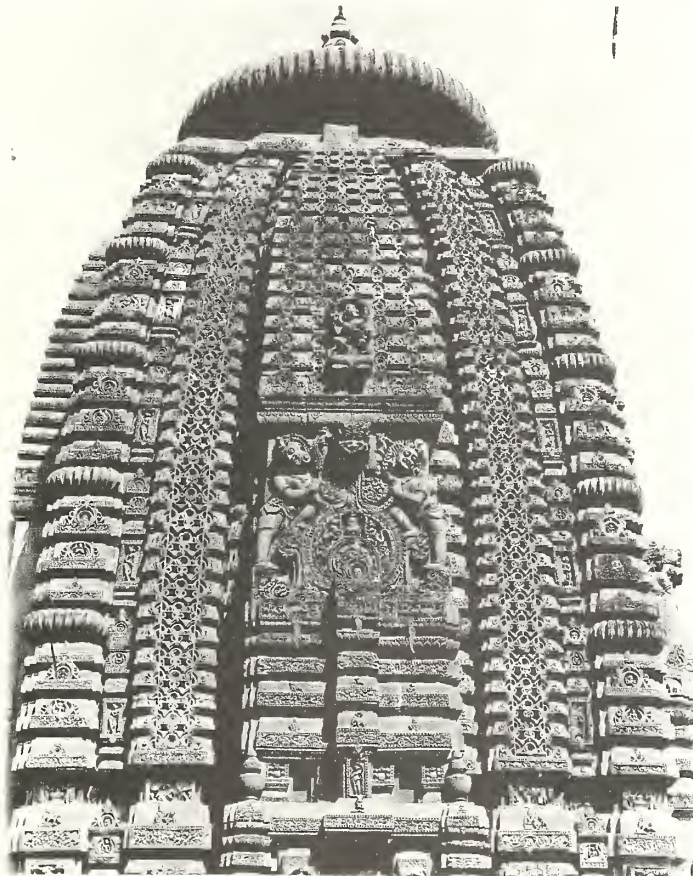


FIG. 26. Detail of *gandi*, Muktesvara temple, Bhubanesvar.





# WRITING THE WORD OF GOD: SOME EARLY QUR'ĀN MANUSCRIPTS AND THEIR MILIEUX, PART I

BY ESTELLE WHELAN

One is left wondering how anyone dares to date a MS. from the writing alone.

—A. S. Tritton<sup>1</sup>

WESTERN SCHOLARS COMING TO GRIPS WITH ARABIC MANUSCRIPTS for the first time after years of striving to master the language from printed texts often find the experience disheartening. Not only are they cast adrift among the idiosyncrasies of individual handwriting, their firm grasp of grammar sabotaged by scribal ignorance or carelessness and their confidence shaken by violations of the orthographic rules (connection of supposedly unconnected letters, for example), but they are also unlikely to have received from either their teachers or their books much guidance in how to deal with their perplexity.

After such an initiation, the opportunity to work with early Qur'ān manuscripts of the type commonly called “Kūfic” seems to promise refreshment. Here are bold, clean letter forms, neatly laid out in spacious lines, uncluttered by ornamentation, and hardly affected by scribal quirks. Even the vocalizations are of a pattern so unfamiliar that they need not distract attention for more than a moment or two. It comes as a shock, then, to discover that at first these folios can hardly be read at all, even that a careful search is required to find, on any given page, recognizable words to help identify the correct Qur'ānic passage. Pondering this situation leads to some unexpected conclusions.

Study by Western scholars of early Arabic script is nearly as old as Orientalism itself.<sup>2</sup> Generations of scholars have struggled to determine conclusively whether or not it originated in ancient Nabatean or Syriac writing and to identify specific calligraphic and monumental types from inadequate and even garbled descriptions in early Arabic texts. Although some progress has been made, it must be admitted that these issues remain shrouded in darkness. Perhaps most frustrating of all, however, have been the slight results achieved by paleographers who have tried to date the fragmentary earliest Qur'ān manuscripts by comparing individual letter forms with those found in the handful of inscriptions that survive from the first and second *hijrī* centuries, on one hand, and a number of early papyri of no monumental significance on the other.<sup>3</sup>

Without recapitulating the entire history of these efforts, it is worth noting some of the highlights here. The first important distinction recognized was that between the angular scripts called “Kūfic” and the

cursive scripts of the calligraphers.<sup>4</sup> In 1911 Bernhard Moritz commented, rather confusingly, “it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the difference between the two types was chiefly due to the nature of the material written on, though at the same time there existed a tendency to create a separate monumental script.”<sup>5</sup> Nabia Abbott attempted to identify some of the early Qur'ānic scripts from brief textual descriptions. For example, a single phrase in the fourth-/tenth-century *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm led to her identifying Hījāzī script by three rather general traits, none of them exclusive to it.<sup>6</sup> She then defined Kūfic by the absence of this *combination* of traits and went on to propose two subcategories—one angular, one rounded.<sup>7</sup> Without denying the value of Abbott's work, it must still be admitted that her findings, at least those related to Kūfic script, are too theoretical to be of much help in the study of existing early Qur'ān manuscripts.

More recently French scholars in particular have revived an inductive approach, based on close examination of large collections of early Qur'ān manuscripts.<sup>8</sup> The method involves recording minute variations in the letter forms, subsequently grouping manuscripts according to perceived similarities in these letter forms, and finally arranging the groups in a sequence implying chronological development.<sup>9</sup> Carefully constructed as they are, however, such detailed classifications have not yet provided a viable framework for analysis of Qur'āns from the earliest period. A primary difficulty in identifying the main lines of development is the sheer quantity of surviving material, most of it inadequately published; the vast number of variations in detail even within single manuscripts tends to blur the picture still further.

It has long been accepted that, for writing the Qur'ān, “Kūfic” script was superseded by “broken Kūfic” in the course of the fourth/tenth century. The prevailing chronological framework for “Kūfic” Qur'āns themselves, however, is based not on paleography but on organization of ornament; manuscripts lacking ornamental divisions between *sūrahs* have been considered the earliest, followed by those with purely ornamental divisions at the ends of *sūrahs* and only later by those with ornamental headings containing the written titles of the *sūrahs*.<sup>10</sup> Since the formulation of this rather crude schema earlier in this century scholars have striven to place individual manuscripts in relation to it, but they have been largely unsuccessful in refining the model itself. The resulting frustration has sometimes



led to what seem counsels of despair: "There is no scientifically defensible position other than to suspend . . . all judgement until there have been made, with the most minute observations of detail, regroupings by families, which comparisons and careful indexing will perhaps enable us to apportion chronologically and geographically."<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, the author proposes to try another tack, applying classical art-historical methods to the paleography of some early Qurʾān manuscripts as a modest first step toward a more thorough revision of the framework for study of such monuments. It is curious that, over many decades, such methods have not been systematically applied to Qurʾānic script but only to ornament. After a brief general analysis of the script generally labeled "Kūfic," two small but distinct groups of Qurʾān manuscripts, selected from the much larger body of surviving material, will be analyzed in detail; they have been chosen because their paleographic and codicological differences offer a kind of test of the validity of the prevailing chronological model. It is hoped that such close analysis of a circumscribed selection of material will provide signposts for further, and more productive, exploration of the entire corpus. In a subsequent study the ornament of these same manuscripts will be considered, in an effort both to confirm the distinctions observed here and to help localize the production of the two groups.

### *Characteristics of Early Qurʾān Script*

To return for a moment to those hapless scholars struggling to read their first "Kūfic" Qurʾān manuscripts, it is worth trying to isolate the source of their difficulty. It can hardly be the letter forms, for they are sharply drawn and unambiguous; the similarity between *dāl/dhāl* and *kāf* may at first cause some confusion (e.g., Figs. 2, ll. 2, 3, 5; and 20, l. 8), but otherwise the letters are more distinct than in some printed texts. Assuming that these scholars know the Qurʾān well enough, why is it so difficult to pick out familiar words and phrases?

The answer is obvious yet seldom taken into account in discussions of "Kūfic" script. The typical early Qurʾān is not written in words and phrases: It is written in groups of connected letters separated by spaces.<sup>12</sup> To compound the difficulty, isolated letters are treated as groups in this sense and are preceded and followed by spaces of the same width. It takes some practice before the scholar learns to allow for this spacing and to regroup the letter clusters into familiar verbal expressions.

It is indeed a striking characteristic of most of the earliest Qurʾāns that the *spaces* between groups of

connected letters are relatively uniform within a given manuscript, much more so than some letter forms and the connecting lines themselves. These spaces thus provide a kind of skeleton, which is fleshed out by the letter clusters. Several other characteristics of the writing underscore the importance of this skeleton.

First, the letters and connecting lines were written with fairly broad and uniform strokes except for tiny hairline diagonals at the beginning of *dāl/dhāl*, initial and medial *kāf*, and initial and isolated *ʿayn/ghayn*.

Second, there was considerable flexibility in drawing the connecting lines and the letter bodies that lent themselves to horizontal extension (*dāl/dhāl*, *ṣād/qād*, *ṭā/zā*, *kāf*).<sup>13</sup> Although this flexibility was not unlimited, it was sufficient to permit really broad variations within a single manuscript and even on a single page, sometimes within a single line (e.g., Figs. 8, 11, 15, and 22).

Third, flexibility was greater in the direction of expansion than in that of contraction. Occasionally, the expandable letters might be contracted to quite small proportions, particularly at the ends of lines (e.g., Figs. 18, l. 3; and 20, l. 12), but this solution seems to have been considered undesirable, for it occurs relatively seldom in the finer manuscripts. On the other hand, the dimensions of other letters—particularly looped letters like *fā*, *qāf*, *mīm*, *hā*, *lā marbūʿah*, *wāw*—were rarely altered, even at the ends of lines, possibly because the uniform width of the stroke allowed little scope for contraction beyond eliminating the lines connecting such letters, which resulted in their tangential alignment. Occasionally, when the scribe intended to make two letters tangential, he inadvertently left a narrow channel between them; then a tiny hairline stroke was inserted to connect the two letters at their closest points (e.g., Figs. 10, l. 1; 12, l. 5; and 19, l. 17). This solution was usually so subtly executed that the reader scans the lines without noticing that a potentially disturbing gap has been closed in this way.

Fourth, words (never connected letter groups) were freely divided between lines, without respect for natural breaks in sense or pronunciation, in contrast, for example, to syllabic division in English.<sup>14</sup> One corollary is that uneven side margins, particularly on the left, are quite common, though occasionally, when a line fell too far short of the ideal margin, a little marker was inserted to lengthen it.<sup>15</sup>

What has been defined so far should be understood as a general system, never absolute in detail. Spaces between connected groups of letters *do* vary, as is only to be expected from work dependent upon the human eye and hand rather than upon machines. When there is greater variation, it usually takes the form of slight compression toward the end of a line or broadening to







accommodate a descender from the line above. The latter adjustment naturally occurs more frequently when the space between lines is smaller. In only one situation do much larger intervals occur consistently; it will be discussed later in this article. Otherwise, it is generally true that the spaces along lines remain uniform, as do looped letters, and that horizontally expandable letters and connecting lines are adjusted to the required lengths.

How did this system work in practice? Some questions immediately suggest themselves. Did the calligraphers rule their lines and side margins, then block out the letter groups before writing the text? It seems not. François Déroche has commented that, of the Qurʾān manuscripts from the earliest period now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris—he has catalogued 295—only a few show any trace of rulings, and the proportion seems equally low in the Istanbul collections with which he has been working.<sup>16</sup> Of twenty-four “Kūfic” Qurʾān fragments in The Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, ranging from one to 201 folios, only one reveals such rulings.<sup>17</sup> Déroche has considered the possibility that scribes erased their rulings so carefully as to leave no trace. This hypothesis seems inherently improbable, however, especially as no such reticence was shown in the illuminations, where rectangles, diagonals, and circles were often scored so deeply into the parchment that the scars remain visible through the text on the reverse sides of the folios.<sup>18</sup> It is further belied by close scrutiny of the writing itself: Though seldom actually disturbing, the sloping, sagging, and bulging of the written lines on most early Qurʾān pages are visible to the naked eye and even more apparent when a straight-edge is applied along the base lines. Even the right-hand margins are rarely perfectly straight. Clearly, then, the scribe most often wrote “freehand,” relying upon his “eye” to assemble his text on the page.

Once again the question poses itself: How, without the help of prior layout, was it possible to achieve the spacious, unhurried, monumental style of these great Qurʾāns? The spaciousness was, as already noted, built in. For the whole system to work, however, the “building blocks” from which the scribe constructed the text page had to be both standardized and flexible.

This reasoning leads to a fifth aspect of most early Qurʾānic scripts—the varying combinations of stereotyped strokes required to produce the entire alphabet and thus the entire text. Long ago Samuel Flury devised an analytical method primarily for the study of monumental inscriptions.<sup>19</sup> He reduced the twenty-eight letters of the Arabic alphabet to eighteen groups, each containing letters that, though different in sound, are identical in form: 1) *alif*, 2) *bāʾ/tāʾ/thāʾ*, 3) *jīm/hāʾ/khāʾ*, 4) *dāl/dhāl*, 5) *rāʾ/zāʾ*, 6) *sīn/shīn*, 7) *ṣād/ḍād*, 8) *ṭāʾ/zāʾ*,

Illustration 1. Forms of *fāʾ* and *qāf* in Different Positions

	<i>fāʾ</i>	<i>qāf</i>
initial		
medial		
terminal		

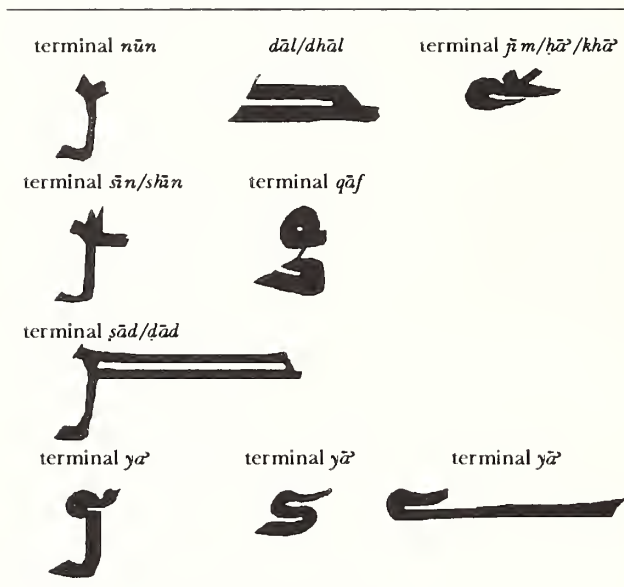
9) *ʿayn/ghayn*, 10) *fāʾ/qāf*, 11) *kāf*, 12) *lām*, 13) *mīm*, 14) *nūn*, 15) *hāʾ*, 16) *wāw*, 17) *yāʾ*, 18) *lām-alif*. For each inscription he included within each group all the apparent permutations, arranged in order of increasing ornamental complexity, arguing that this sequence gives a clearer picture of the general character of a script than would a more “schematic” arrangement by position (initial, medial, terminal, and isolated).<sup>20</sup> Flury’s system has been emulated or adapted by other scholars working with monumental and decorative inscriptions.<sup>21</sup>

In 1966, however, Lisa Volov pointed out that Flury’s method of classifying letters is not really satisfactory for studies of paleographic ornament. She telescoped his eighteen groups into five, defined by the predominant character of the irreducible letter forms—vertical, rectangular, round, low, or oblique. This simplification permitted her to focus more directly on ornamental modifications in both the bodies and the appendages of various letters.<sup>22</sup>

Classifications designed primarily to highlight ornamental development are, however, not helpful in analysis of the earliest Qurʾān scripts, which are distinguished by an absence of paleographic ornament. Indeed, even reliance primarily on letter bodies<sup>23</sup> as the classifying principle is somewhat misleading, for in such scripts the position of a given letter, deliberately set aside in Flury’s system, must be taken into account along with its body form. For example, in initial and medial positions *fāʾ* and *qāf* are indistinguishable in form; in terminal and isolated positions, however, *fāʾ* shares the tail extended along the base line with some of the toothed letters (*bāʾ/tāʾ/thāʾ*) and *mīm* (e.g., Figs. 11, l. 2; and 22, l. 11), whereas the tail of *qāf* descends below the line in a sickle-shaped curve or is stylized in the form of a small *dāl/dhāl* (e.g., Figs. 1, l. 1; 15, l. 6; and 19, l. 20; see Illustration 1). In the same way, isolated and terminal *sīn/shīn* and *ṣād/ḍād* have tail forms identical to



Illustration 2. Similarities among Terminals



isolated and terminal *nūn* (e.g., Figs. 9, ll. 3, 5; 14, ll. 2, 29, 12, 13; and 22, l. 17; see Illustration 2).<sup>24</sup> Of all the letters in the alphabet *yāʾ* offers the richest set of such connections. Although its initial and medial forms are indistinguishable from those of the other single-toothed letters, in terminal and isolated positions it can take any of three alternative tails (Illustration 2): a tail in the shape of a terminal *nūn* (e.g., Figs. 4, l. 1; 14, l. 6; and 18, l. 3), like those of *sīn/shīn* and *šād/ḍād*; a tail in the shape of a small *dāl/dhāl* (e.g., Fig. 4, l. 5), like that of *qāf*; or a reversed tail joined to the body by a curve (e.g., Figs. 6, l. 3; 15, l. 3; and 20, ll. 10–13), a type that usually occurs on terminal *jīm/hāʾ/khāʾ* (e.g., Fig. 8, ll. 3–5) and occasionally terminal *ʿayn/ghayn* as well. Because the network of such paleographic relations helps to define this category of early Qurʾānic scripts, a method based on separation of letter bodies from their appendages can actually hamper analysis.

In examining the structure of early Qurʾānic paleography, it does indeed seem useful to pursue some aspects of these relations. To begin with, the *alif* sets the upper limit of each line, beyond which no other tall letter extends.<sup>25</sup> Although in most instances *ṭāʾ/zāʾ* and *lām* (as well as terminal *kāf*) may be equally tall, as connected letters they are subject to influences that can affect their height. The source of such alterations is a peculiarity of *jīm/hāʾ/khāʾ*. In this group the letter body is formed by a stroke that begins above the line and slopes or curves down to the right, where it joins the base line. Preceding letters are usually connected to this upper stroke, which requires that they be raised on a secondary base line (e.g., Figs. 7, ll. 3–4; 19, l. 20; and 20, l. 8) level with the upper horizontal strokes of *dāl/dhāl*, *šād/*

*ḍād*, *ṭāʾ/zāʾ*, and *kāf*. When *ṭāʾ/zāʾ* and *lām* are thus raised before *jīm/hāʾ/khāʾ*, their ascenders are correspondingly shortened so as not to rise beyond *alif*, which, as an unconnected letter, is not affected by what follows it. Second, the looped letters seem to be proportioned in relation to *alif*, though the proportions can vary from manuscript to manuscript. To cite one instance, *mīm*, when on the base line, may rise to one quarter, one third, or one half the height of *alif*;<sup>26</sup> as it is drawn exactly the same size, regardless of position, when raised before *jīm/hāʾ/khāʾ* it rises correspondingly higher in relation to *alif*. The same principle applies to *hāʾ*, which is generally slightly taller than *mīm*. On the other hand, single-toothed letters can vary in height, depending on their positions in relation to other letters; these variations are particularly clear when several such letters appear in sequence (e.g., Figs. 11, l. 2; and 19, l. 17).<sup>27</sup> Third, in addition to the means for fitting text to page already mentioned (compression of space at the ends of lines, expansion and contraction of the base line, division of words between lines), a further, purely paleographic device was also used. As mentioned earlier, there is one striking exception to the generally uniform spacing between letter groups in these early Qurʾānic scripts; it involves the most dramatic form of terminal and isolated *yāʾ*. Sometimes a much larger than normal space was left between the end of one letter group and the first letter of the next, when the latter terminated in *yāʾ*. In this instance, too, the letters of the second group were raised on a secondary base line, whereas the tail of terminal *yāʾ* was turned to the right and drawn out, on a slightly rising trajectory along the main base line, past the initial letter of the group and toward the first group, thus reducing the enlarged space to a normal, or even slightly narrower, interval (e.g., Figs. 8, l. 5; 15, l. 3; and 21, ll. 1, 5, 8–9). The spacing between letter groups must thus be defined as the distance between the end of the first letter group and the closest element of the second, which is not always the first letter. Curiously, though terminal and isolated *jīm/hāʾ/khāʾ* have a similar curving, turned-back tail, it is usually short and does not appear to have functioned in the same way (e.g., Fig. 8, l. 4).

Before proceeding farther, it will be useful to focus the discussion on two specific groups of manuscripts. Although both conform to the pattern described so far, they also differ in ways that may illuminate the larger question of Qurʾān copying in the earliest period.

### Manuscript Group 1

The type manuscript for the first group is in several fragments scattered among a number of museum and

library collections. Déroche identified several of them: 1407 in The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, four folios; 350a in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, 144 folios; 23 in the Aya Sofya library, Istanbul, sixty-seven folios; Eminet Hazine 26, ff. 14–19, in the Topkapı Sarayı library, Istanbul, six folios; XL (formerly 5) and XLII (6c) in the Royal Library, Copenhagen, thirty-one and three folios respectively; and 449 and 452 in the Gotha State Library, totaling seven folios.<sup>28</sup> Additional fragments are I.2211 in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin-Dahlem, twenty-two folios; 37.6 in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., thirty-two folios; Marsh 178 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, twenty-two folios;<sup>29</sup> and Cod. Guelph. 12.11 Aug. 2° in the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, six folios.<sup>30</sup> The Wolfenbüttel fragment was a gift from the noted Orientalist of the University of Leiden Jacobus Golius (Jacob Gool) in 1655 or 1656;<sup>31</sup> the Bodleian manuscript was also in Golius' possession as early as 1656.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, the text of the two fragments is partly contiguous. These two fragments can thus be taken as evidence of the original, or at least an early, condition of the manuscript, without "improvements" made for the modern market,<sup>33</sup> and can serve as a "check" on features present in other extant fragments and in related manuscripts the provenience of which cannot be traced back so far.<sup>34</sup>

A total of 344 folios is known from this Qurʾān.<sup>35</sup> Among them the illuminated opening and closing of one *juzʿ*<sup>36</sup> (the twenty-first) can be identified. The double-page opening is shared between Berlin I.2211 (f. 22b; f. 22a is blank) and CBL 1407 (f. 1a); the closing is in CBL 1407 (ff. 3b–4a; f. 4b is blank).<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, this *juzʿ* is nearly complete: Ninety-three folios are known, including the opening and closing illuminations;<sup>38</sup> probably there are three still unaccounted for (containing XXIX:68–69 and the heading for Sūrah XXX; XXXII:17–20; and XXXIII:1–3), which would bring the total to ninety-six. Thirty *ajzāʾ* of approximately equal length would thus have totaled close to 2,880 folios, of which those known to survive constitute almost 12 percent. The manuscript seems to have been composed of gatherings of eight sheets (sixteen folios) each, six gatherings to a *juzʿ*.

This Qurʾān is written on skin<sup>39</sup> in horizontal format; the text, five lines of dark brown ink on each side, covers an area of 12.7–13 x 22.3–22.8 cm.<sup>40</sup> The lines are spaced well apart, so that the tips of the *alif*s, *lām*s, and other tall letters do not approach the base line above and descenders rarely impose spatial adjustments on the line below. Except for slight tapering at terminals and angles, the stroke is generally of uniform width, whether tracing letters or connecting lines. Some letters are "pointed" with thin strokes in the same ink in which the text is written. In addition, diacriticals

are indicated by large red and dark greenish-brown dots.<sup>41</sup> The use of markers at the ends of short lines is rare. The tail of terminal *qāf* is always in the form of a small *dāl/dhāl*, and this tail also occurs on *yāʾ*. More common tails on terminal *yāʾ* are, however, that in the shape of terminal *nūn* and the turned-back form, the latter particularly though not exclusively in stereotyped combinations like the word *fi*. The upper stroke of *ḥīm/ḥāʾ/khāʾ* is always gracefully curved and preceding connected letters raised on a secondary base line.

Nine *sūrah* openings are preserved;<sup>42</sup> most<sup>43</sup> consist of richly illuminated bands of vegetal ornament in gold, sepia, and dark brown<sup>44</sup> laid out on a geometric grid. The band is surrounded by a complex frame, from which an elaborate illuminated palmette projects into the outer margin. Against the ornamental grid the title and number of verses are written in gold outlined in sepia; a contour line reserved from the ornament helps to set the script off from the background. The letter forms in the headings are identical to those in the text, including some "pointing" by means of diagonal strokes. The only spacing between letter groups, however, is that resulting from the abutted contour panels of adjacent groups; each line thus constitutes a continuous band resembling an inscription. The opening of *juzʿ* 21 is a double-page illumination in the same style as the *sūrah* openings, including palmettes, but more elaborate in design; there is no title or text of any kind. The closing also consists of a double-page illumination, with palmettes; it is constructed from design elements similar to those in the opening but arranged in a somewhat different pair of compositions.

The end of each *āyah*, or verse, is marked by a small gold rosette (e.g., Figs. 2, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 12). After every fifth verse there is a gold *hāʾ*, the *abjad* symbol for the numeral 5, with a sepia contour line. The scribe did not usually leave extra space for this mark, which was drawn larger than the letter *hāʾ* in the text itself; it thus had to be crowded into the normal interval between letter groups and often overlaps the flanking letters. After every tenth verse there is a large gilt rosette with a reserved center in which is written the cumulative total of verses from the beginning of the *sūrah*: ten, twenty, thirty, and so on. When such divisions fell within the text line, extra space was usually left for the ornaments, which makes it certain that they were planned and are contemporary with the elegant illuminated headings in the manuscript; when a tenth verse ends with the line, the rosette is a marginal ornament (e.g., Figs. 1 and 11). In longer *sūrahs* there are also very large, fine rosettes in gold after each one hundred verses, with the cumulative number inscribed in the center (e.g., Fig. 3). These rosettes also can fall in the margins, but, when they occur in the middle of text lines, wider spaces have



been left. To all these systems there are occasional exceptions—omission of some *āyah* marks, failure to leave room for large rosettes, and the like. The style and execution of all the illuminations will be discussed in Part II of this article.

Ornament is also used to mark points in the text other than cumulative verse totals. For example, in Marsh 178, a marginal rosette with the word *sajdah* inscribed in the center indicates a prostration after XXXVIII:24, one of fourteen such prostrations prescribed in the Qurʾān.<sup>45</sup> There should be a similar ornament at the end of XXXII:15, which occurs in Aya Sofya 23 in Istanbul, but the author has not examined this manuscript. More intriguing are two details in Copenhagen XL (5), which contains portions of Sūrahs XXIII (*al-Muʾminūn*, “The Believers”) and XXIV (*al-Nūr*, “Light”), and the Washington manuscript, which contains a portion of Sūrah II (*al-Baqarah*, “The Cow”), the longest in the entire Qurʾān. In Copenhagen XL (5) a small rosette inscribed with the word *miʾah* (one hundred) has been crowded in at the appropriate point in Sūrah XXIII, on f. 13b, where no space was left for it (Fig. 3); on f. 16a, however, where verse 110 ends with the first line of text, a larger and more elaborate rosette inscribed *miʾah wa-ʿashr* (one hundred and ten) has been placed in the margin (Fig. 4). The only major division of the text that falls near this point is the beginning of the fifth seventh, which is said to occur in the middle of either Sūrah XXII or XXIII or at the end of XXIII, certainly too far away for this ornament to be intended to mark it.<sup>46</sup> Sūrah XXIII ends after eight more verses, on the fourth line of f. 18b, and the heading for Sūrah XXIV falls on the last line; no room was left for the ornamental band that frames most *sūrah* headings in this manuscript,<sup>47</sup> and the illuminator had to content himself with placing a palmette in the margin. It is tempting to conclude that the copyist had a lapse while working on this section of the text and simply neglected to leave space for ornaments, but doubt is cast on this conclusion by a somewhat parallel situation in the Washington fragment. A large rosette with *miʾatān* (two hundred) written in the center occurs on f. 16b, in the margin at the end of a line (Fig. 1). Verse 210 ends with the last line on f. 16b, but, instead of a rosette in the margin there, a much more elaborate rosette, inscribed with the words *miʾatān wa-ʿashr* (two hundred and ten), has been placed at the beginning of verse 211 on the first line of text on folio 17a, which was indented significantly to allow for it (Fig. 2). Again no standard large division of the Qurʾān occurs anywhere near this point, but the fact that space was left at the beginning of a line for a minor division mark remains extremely puzzling.

In associating other manuscripts with group 1 it has seemed best to include only those that share all the

features of the type manuscript; undoubtedly other extant examples also belong to this group, but at present they are either too fragmentary (lacking parts of the text where major illuminations would fall, for example) or too incompletely published for certainty. To err on the side of caution seems preferable.

One of the most important manuscripts to be assigned to group 1 is a fragmentary Qurʾān divided among at least five collections: 1421 in The Chester Beatty Library,<sup>48</sup> M712 in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York,<sup>49</sup> EH 16 in the Topkapı Sarayı in Istanbul,<sup>50</sup> 47 in the Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi in Istanbul,<sup>51</sup> and A.338 in the National Museum, Damascus.<sup>52</sup> It was written in very dark brown ink (sometimes verging on black), nine lines to a text page measuring approximately 12.7 x 21.5 cm. The script is very close to that of the type manuscript, but, because of the larger number of lines per page, the spacing between them is tighter, and more frequent adjustments in spacing between letter groups were required to accommodate descenders from above. The copyist has also more often used markers at the ends of very short lines than did the copyist of the type manuscript. The letters are pointed with small crescents, though these markings seem to have been restored and supplemented at a later date. Other differences from the type manuscript include the use of a pyramid of six small gold disks rather than a rosette to mark *āyah* endings, the absence of contour panels around *khamsah* marks, the inclusion of green in the illuminations, and the addition of red and green dots between the petals of the rosettes at the end of each ten verses. The script, however, is so nearly identical that one might be tempted to assign the two manuscripts to a single copyist. Only such minute details as a slightly freer “swing” to the *alif* and sharper tapering of the shaft of terminal *nūn* in the type manuscript and a tendency to displace the central dot of space in *mīm*, *fāʾ*/*qāf*, and *wāw* to the right in CBL 1421 *et al.* reveal the presence of distinct “hands” (Figs. 15 and 16).

The fact that Topkapı EH 16 contains just half of *juzʾ* 11 (according to the Cairo edition) in thirty-nine folios<sup>53</sup> suggests that each *juzʾ* consisted of seventy-eight folios. Morgan M712 in New York, however, consists of gatherings of eight sheets, that is, sixteen folios; if that pattern prevailed throughout the manuscript, then the length of a *juzʾ* was probably eighty folios.<sup>54</sup> Four of the fragments contain notices that the Qurʾān had been made a *waqf* in the Great Mosque of Damascus by one ʿAbd al-Munʿim in 298/911.<sup>55</sup> In addition, *ḥubbisa lillāh* (“reserved for God”) is written at the top of folios 5a and 20a of Morgan M712 (Figs. 15 and 16).

The paleography of these notices calls for comment. Déroche has noted that in the *waqf* notices in Topkapı EH 16 and CBL 1421 (with which Damascus A.338

should be included) *alif* consists of a vertical stroke, without a bend to the right at the bottom, and terminal *mīm* has a short vertical tail, whereas in TIM 47 the *alif* does bend to the right and the *mīm* has a horizontal tail. On the other hand, the curve of terminal *nūn* (apparently a full semicircle in EH 16) differs in all three (four) from the angular form in the Qurʾān text itself.<sup>56</sup> The same is true of the related terminals. Other differences from the script of the Qurʾān text itself may be noted. For example, in contrast to the generally uniform width of the stroke that characterizes the text, in the *waqf* notices base-line strokes are notably thinner than those forming the letters. The *alif* varies considerably in height. *Dāl/dhāl* has been reduced to minute proportions in relation to both vertical and looped letters. In the word *Allāh* the second *lām* is shorter than the first and sometimes bends slightly forward toward *hāʾ*. In CBL 1421, in the group *liʿabd*, the scribe hesitated over connecting *lām* and *ʿayn*; he first wrote *ʿayn* as an initial letter requiring the raising of preceding *lām*, which in the Qurʾān script it does not, but finally settled on a compromise. Indeed, the conception of the raised secondary base line seems to have escaped him entirely, for in *li-masjid* he has written the first two letters on the main base line, which necessitated lowering *jīm-dāl*. The two briefer notices in Morgan M712 are still more revealing. That on folio 5a shows the same thinner base line and curving tail on terminal *sīn* as in the longer *waqf* notices (Fig. 15). The expression *lillāh* offers some new features, however. The second *lām* is shorter than the first, as in the notices, but the line connecting it to *hāʾ* traces an acute angle below the base line. *Hāʾ* itself has a hollow center rather than the pinpoint opening characteristic of the manuscript. Most striking is the inclusion of “serifs” on the tops of both *lāms*. The notice on folio 20a, however, though retaining the hollow *hāʾ*, lacks the serifs and acute-angled ligature; most striking is the tail of the terminal *sīn*, for which an angular form was adopted in apparent imitation of the same letter in the first line of the text immediately below (Fig. 16).

This evidence of deliberate imitation is not unique; similar traces can be observed in other *waqf* notices from the Great Mosque at Damascus, notably those in the Qurʾān of Amājūr, which Déroche attributes to the period in which the manuscript was restored (314/926–27),<sup>57</sup> and in the Qurʾān of Abūʾl-Najm Badr, which may have been deposited in the Great Mosque before 289/902.<sup>58</sup> Perhaps more significant is the fact that the characteristics betraying the scribes all belong to a style of cursive script common in the third/ninth century.<sup>59</sup>

Several other manuscripts in The Chester Beatty Library may belong to group 1, but they are too fragmentary to contain all the diagnostic features outlined (Figs. 17 and 18).<sup>60</sup> As already noted, there

are undoubtedly manuscripts in other collections that, after more complete publication and careful study, will prove to belong to group 1.<sup>61</sup> In the meantime, before exploring the implications of the observations made about this group here, it will be useful to examine a second group of early Qurʾān manuscripts.

### *Manuscript Group 2*

The type manuscript for group 2 is 1404 in The Chester Beatty Library, consisting of 201 large parchment folios in vertical format, twenty lines to a side, covering an area 39.2–40.8 x 30.3–31.5 cm., in brown ink (Figs. 19–22).<sup>62</sup> No other fragment of the manuscript has been identified. This portion was in Fūʾah in the Egyptian delta in 1905, when Moritz published details of the twenty ornamented pages contained in it.<sup>63</sup> It is in very poor condition; many leaves are tattered, and the ink has eaten through the parchment in a great many places. In addition, both text and ornament have been retraced, amended, annotated, and replaced in a variety of hands and in different-colored inks through the centuries. Pasted inside the binding, which is of the Mamlūk period,<sup>64</sup> is a notice, written in a cursive hand in black ink on paper, declaring that in the year 1140/1727 Amīr Muḥammad Jūrbajī (Corbaci) Ghānim ʿAzabān ordered the book, considered to be in the hand of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān,<sup>65</sup> to be restored by means of pasting the torn fragments onto sheets of paper. There are indeed torn and truncated pages that have been pasted to pieces of paper of the same kind as that on which the restoration notice itself is written.<sup>66</sup> Because of the extent of the damage and repairs to the individual folios it is almost impossible to reconstruct the original formation of this manuscript. Nevertheless, in two instances, ff. 56–57 and 65–66, the connections at the inner margins are at least partially preserved, and it can be determined that single skins were folded in the middle to produce two folios.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, whenever there is a continuous sequence of text over several pages, it is clear that the prevailing pattern was for hair sides and flesh sides to face each other in alternation. The manuscript was thus probably made up originally of single folded sheets.<sup>68</sup>

The lines of text are rather closely spaced, necessitating frequent adjustments to accommodate descenders from the line above, including altered spacing and shortened ascenders. The *alif* sets the limit of the line but is squatter than in group 1, so that more lines can be fitted onto the page. The stroke of the pen is slightly thinner in the elongated connecting lines than in the letters. Some letters are “pointed” with thin strokes (peculiarly *lāʾ* is often marked with only a single stroke,



as is, of course, *nūn*); these strokes are in the same ink as the text and appear to be original. The spacing between letter groups, though following the general principles already outlined, is generally narrower than in group 1; furthermore, though very long extensions of the base line are less common, greater use has been made of the elongated, turned-back terminal *yāʾ* and of markers, in a variety of shapes, at the ends of short lines (Figs. 20 and 21). There are also several striking differences in the script from that of group 1. For example, a curved upper stroke on *jīm/hāʾ/khāʾ* is rare; more often it is straight. Furthermore, though preceding connected letters are usually raised on a secondary base line, another solution, in which they are connected to the base-line stroke, has also been adopted. In these instances the diagonal stroke crosses the base line (e.g., Fig. 20, ll. 11, 16). The tail in the form of a small *dāl/dhāl* on terminal *yāʾ* and *qāf* seems to be entirely lacking. Instead, terminal *qāf* always ends in a curvilinear form resembling a sickle (e.g., Figs. 17, ll. 1, 4; 19, l. 20; and 21, l. 2). Furthermore, terminal *yāʾ* only occasionally ends in a tail shaped like that of terminal *nūn*; far more frequent is the turned-back tail. It is clear, then, that the interrelations among letters were defined slightly differently in the manuscripts of groups 1 and 2.

Verse endings are marked by three or more diagonal strokes in the same ink as the text (e.g., Fig. 21, l. 16); there is no indication of fives or tens in the original text (Figs. 20 and 21). Subsequently, however, crude circular ornaments in black ink, often combined with colors, were added to mark the ends of groups of ten verses.

One of the most significant contrasts with manuscripts in group 1 is the absence of *sūrah* headings and titles. The endings of *sūrahs* are, however, marked by ornamental bands in colors, originally without gold (Fig. 22).<sup>69</sup> That these bands were intended as terminal decorations is clear from the fact that they fill out short lines at the ends of *sūrahs* but never occur on the beginning line of a *sūrah*. If a particular *sūrah* ends in a nearly full line, then space has been left for a decorative band to separate it from the beginning of the next *sūrah*. Sometimes both solutions are combined, so that the ornamental band has a stepped shape. The bands contain no text. Sixteen of thirty *juzʿ* endings occur in the manuscript, but the text is written continuously at those points, and the *ajzāʾ* are not marked or ornamented in any way.<sup>70</sup>

A. S. Yahuda, from whom CBL 1404 was purchased, dated it to the first *hijrī* century. Moritz, in the legends to his photographs, dated it to the second or third century, and Joseph Karabacek, in a highly critical review of Moritz's volume, insisted on the third century.<sup>71</sup> In fact, there is no external evidence to support any date. Yahuda compared this Qurʾān to a manuscript from the mosque of ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ, now in the

Dār al-Kutub in Cairo, 18953. Although the latter manuscript has often been mentioned, little of it has been published. In the anonymous catalogue of the Cairo collection issued in 1310/1893 it is listed as having 568 folios, all in "Kūfic," 340 written in an early hand with twelve lines to a side and the remainder written in 1246/1830 with eleven lines to a side.<sup>72</sup> According to a note at the end of the manuscript the latter folios were the work of Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Ṭanbūlī<sup>73</sup> al-Shāfiʿī al-Azharī with the support of Muḥammad ʿAlī Pasha.<sup>74</sup> From a close examination of Moritz's plates, it seems that the ornaments shown on plates 6–12 are of a markedly different character from those shown on plates 1–5.<sup>75</sup> As for those on plates 1–5, it seems clear, even from the photographs, that some alterations have been made.<sup>76</sup>

The format of the text page in this Cairo manuscript is slightly horizontal, almost square, in contrast to that of CBL 1404. The script in the very small sample provided on plates 1–5 is clearly similar to that of group 2, but there are several variations, including a slight but noticeable slant to the right<sup>77</sup> and at least one instance in which the terminal *lām* rests on the line (pl. 1, l. 3), though the more familiar terminal below the line also occurs. There are rosettes at the ends of five verses (pl. 1, l. 1) and quatrefoils in square frames at the ends of ten verses (l. 6), and it is clear that extra space was left for these ornaments. Despite the similarities noted by Yahuda, it thus seems that differences in format, paleography, organization of text ornament, and so on preclude the assignment of Cairo 18953 to the same group as CBL 1404.

On the other hand, among a large number of early Qurʾān fragments included in the cache of manuscripts discovered by Paolo Costa under the roof of the Great Mosque of Ṣanʿāʾ in 1973 there is at least one that does seem to belong to group 2.<sup>78</sup> These manuscripts are currently undergoing study and preservation by a team of German and Austrian scholars and conservators, but so far only small and tantalizing samples have been published.<sup>79</sup> The most widely discussed fragment is 20–33.1, a group of twenty-five parchment folios that include a splendid double-page frontispiece with architectural paintings, as well as an ornamental closing to the entire Qurʾān, among the very rare extant survivals of this kind.<sup>80</sup> In a recent study of this manuscript H.-C. von Bothmer ascribed the paintings and illuminations to Umayyad Damascus.<sup>81</sup> Although his arguments will be discussed in detail in Part II of this article, it should be emphasized here that the hoard from the Ṣanʿāʾ mosque included materials from a variety of periods, including nineteenth-century printed books;<sup>82</sup> that there appears to be no *waqf* notice or other indication of a date in the manuscript itself; and that the presumption of an Umayyad attribution seems to have

sharply limited the range of comparative materials taken into consideration. As the author hopes to demonstrate, there are parallels suggesting a date later than the Umayyad period. On the other hand, judging by the small segments of the text itself that have been illustrated, the fine paleography, with slightly thinner connecting lines, a squat *alif*, and closely spaced lines; the multiple strokes at the ends of *āyāt*; and the uninscribed polychrome ornamental bands after *sūrah*s, belong to group 2.<sup>83</sup> The ornaments marking five and ten verses were apparently added to the manuscript sometime after it was completed.<sup>84</sup> There is at present no external evidence for dating the manuscripts of group 2.<sup>85</sup>

### A Note on Vocalization

The manuscripts in both groups 1 and 2, like most “Kūfic” Qurʾāns, are only partly vocalized, according to a simple system that differs from the one currently in use. The prevailing practice was to use large red dots: One dot above the letter (or to the side near the top of a tall letter) indicated *fathah*, one dot below the letter a *kasrah*, and one dot following the letter a *ḍammah*. Two dots in any of these positions indicated a *tanwīn*. Other vocalizations—*hamzah*, *maddah*, *tashdīd*, *sukūn*—were not indicated in this system.

Abbott cited sources to the effect that these other vocalizations were often indicated by marks of different colors, a statement that seems to be borne out by some later manuscripts.<sup>86</sup> The dots of other colors (usually green) found in some “Kūfic” Qurʾāns do not seem to fit this pattern, however. They were applied according to the same principles as the red ones, which they appear to supplement and even “correct.” For example, the following instances of supplemental dots have been drawn from the Bodleian fragment of the type manuscript for group 1 (Marsh 178):

- XXXVIII:57 *wa-ghassāqun*; no red dots; a green dot placed above *sīn*, indicating a *fathah*  
 XXXVIII:58 *wa-ākharu*; a red dot indicating final *ḍammah*; a green dot to top left of *alif*, indicating *fathah*  
 XXXVIII:83 *al-mukhlashīna*; a red dot indicating *kasrah* on *shād*; a green dot to top left of *lām*, indicating *fathah*  
 XXXVIII:84 *fa’l-haqqu*; a red dot indicating *fathah* on *hāʾ*; a green dot after *qāf*, indicating *ḍammah*  
 XXXIX:6 *ẓulumātin*; no red dots; a green dot after *lām*, indicating *ḍammah*

Although in two of these instances green dots are associated with doubled letters, their positions are not the same; it is therefore unlikely that they are meant as

*tashdīds*, especially as green dots appear in similar positions beside letters where there is no question of doubling. Similarly, one green dot occurs in a context where it might indicate a *maddah*, but others are positioned in the same way next to letters where no *maddah* could occur. Nor would *hamzah* or *sukūn* be appropriate where many of the green dots appear. On the other hand, their placement conforms precisely to the correct vocalization established for the red system. The two colors are thus clearly applied according to identical principles.<sup>87</sup>

This point is of particular importance, for it makes it possible to conclude that, when green dots appear on letters already marked by red dots, corrections are intended. In XXXVIII:41 *bi-nuṣbin*, for example, the red dot has been placed after the *nūn*, indicating a *ḍammah*, which is correct according to the Cairo edition; a green dot has, however, been added above the *nūn*, changing the reading to *bi-naṣbin*. In XXXVIII:23 *tiṣ’un wa-tiṣ’unah* the red dots are beneath the two *tāʾ*s, correctly indicating *kasrah*s; green dots have, however, been added above the same two letters, changing the reading to *taṣ’un wa-taṣ’unah*.

At times a sort of “dialogue” seems to have been conducted between the adherents of variant readings. For example, in XXXIII:30 (CBL 1407; Fig. 11, l. 2), the original scribe wrote *yudāʿaf* in a defective spelling without *alif* but with two strokes under the *yāʾ* in the brown ink of the text and a red dot above *ʿayn* to indicate *fathah*; this reading conforms to that in the Cairo edition. Subsequently, in green, the *yāʾ* was corrected to *nūn*, *alif* was added after *ḍād*, and a dot was placed below *ʿayn*, converting the reading to *nuḍāʿif*. Later still, the *yāʾ* was restored with the addition of two red strokes below the original brown ones.<sup>88</sup>

Most of these changes were made as additions, with no attempt to erase or cross out earlier vocalizations or diacritical marks. Perhaps the most common alteration in this manuscript, as well as in several others examined,<sup>89</sup> is the inexplicable emendation of the *kasrah* correctly marking genitive endings to *ḍammah*, which occurs in a variety of words but especially frequently in words like *ʿalayhi* and *fihi*, thus altering them to *ʿalayhu*, *fi hu*, and the like (e.g., Marsh 178, XXXVIII:31, XXXIX:19).<sup>90</sup>

The author does not have the training necessary to evaluate or interpret these indications, but it seems worthwhile to call attention to them. The manuscripts in question probably belong to the period when variant readings of the text proliferated, before the reforms of Ibn Mujāhid (d. 324/936) in the early fourth/tenth century, which led to adoption of the “seven canonical readings,”<sup>91</sup> but the period of the green additions is unclear. They may represent an early phase in the development toward more comprehensive and



systematic presentation of alternative readings, as exemplified in some later manuscripts.<sup>92</sup>

### *The Professional Milieu*

Investigations up to this point have established a series of consistent paleographic and other features that distinguish the manuscripts of groups 1 and 2; these features are summarized in Table 1. Many of these criteria have been recognized in the past, singly or severally, but the interrelations among them have not previously been emphasized. Obviously the two limited groups defined here, though they can surely be expanded through further study, encompass only a tiny proportion of the extant manuscripts of "Kūfic" Qur'āns. Because of clear-cut differences on several dimensions, however, it has seemed useful to try to locate the two groups more precisely in both place and time than has previously been possible. Once that task has been accomplished with some degree of success, it should be easier to classify manuscripts that share some but not all of the features of the type groups. In this respect it is already clear that, paleographically, group 2 has far more extensive and more varied connections among other Qur'ān manuscripts than does group 1.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, it may become possible to assess patterns of cross-fertilization among extant manuscripts that share features of both. The very absence of such common features in the type groups, however, clearly suggests two separate traditions of copying the Qur'ān.

As far as the author is aware, only one text other than the Qur'ān was written in a script that fits into the general category of "Kūfic." It is a fragmentary genealogical work that has not yet been conclusively identified.<sup>94</sup> Its uniqueness is sufficient evidence that the general style of script known as "Kūfic" was specifically a Qur'ānic one. The normally accepted view has been that for copying the Qur'ān this script was superseded by the type known as "Persian Kūfic" or "broken Kūfic," which developed from it probably some time in the fourth/tenth century.<sup>95</sup> The earliest dated Qur'ān codex in "broken Kūfic"<sup>96</sup> is that copied on paper by 'Alī b. Shādhān al-Rāzī al-Bayyī' (*sic*) in 361/972.<sup>97</sup> "Broken Kūfic" was not specific to the Qur'ān, however. Indeed, fifteen years later, in 376/986, the same scribe copied a secular text, *Kutāb akhbār al-naḥwīyyīn al-baṣriyyīn* by Abū 'l-Sa'īd al-Ḥasan al-Sīrāfī (*ca.* 290–368/903–79);<sup>98</sup> it is written in a combination of "broken Kūfic" and cursive script. An autograph manuscript of al-Niffārī's *Mawāqif* dated 349/955–56, in the collection of The Chester Beatty Library, appears to be the earliest known Islamic secular work written in "broken Kūfic" script.<sup>99</sup> Although the history and development of this script

have yet to be studied in detail, it is clear that it was in use for various purposes well before it was adopted for copying the Qur'ān.<sup>100</sup>

In this connection, it is useful to review again some of the literature that has been brought to bear on discussions of Qur'ānic script. Ibn Durustūyah, an 'Abbāsid court secretary of the fourth/tenth century,<sup>101</sup> expressly exempted the copying of the Qur'ān from the principles of orthography and writing that he set forth in his *Kutāb al-kuttāb*. Indeed, he noted that letters of the alphabet were given different shapes in the scripts used by copyists of *maṣāḥif*, other copyists (*al-warrāqūn*), and secretaries (*al-kuttāb*).<sup>102</sup> Even had he not done so, it would have been instantly clear from a survey of his text that the prescribed principles differ sharply in many respects from those extrapolated from the script of "Kūfic" Qur'āns themselves.

Rather than submitting Ibn Durustūyah's entire text to close analysis, it seems sufficient to select his instructions for the treatment of terminal *yā'*, a letter that has been singled out here because of its variability in early Qur'ānic script. Ibn Durustūyah particularly focused on situations in which it is preferable to turn the tail of terminal *yā'* back, to the right (*al-radd*, "return"), and those in which it is preferable to write it with a forward curve, to the left (*al-la'ṭīq*, "curve").<sup>103</sup> Briefly, the tail of this letter must be extended forward after another letter with the same terminus and after *ḥā'*, 'ayn, or *kāf*; when two successive words end in *yā'*, one of them must extend forward. Conversely, after initial *fā'*/*qāf* it is preferable to turn the tail back, and the same is true after *maddah* (except in certain instances in rhyme). After letters like *dāl*/*dhāl* and *ālif* or when preceded by connecting letters the tail of *yā'* can be turned in either direction, so long as there is no "obstacle" (presumably an adjacent descender). At any rate, the turned-back *yā'* should not be so long that it extends beyond (the letter group to which it belongs). That the violation of this last principle is one of the defining characteristics of the earliest Qur'ānic scripts is abundantly clear, however, both from the discussion here and from examination of the manuscripts. The forward extension to which Ibn Durustūyah refers does not, strictly speaking, occur in "Kūfic" script at all, but, if it is equated with the tail in the form of terminal *nūn* or *dāl*/*dhāl*, then it is not difficult to find instances of initial *fā'* and *qāf* followed by terminal *yā'* in these forms (e.g., Fig. 7, ll. 1, 5) and of the apparently more egregious turning back of the tail after *ḥā'* (e.g., Fig. 10, l. 2, *yūḥā*).

Ibn Durustūyah included copyists of the Qur'ān among the 'ulamā', which is also confirmed by the manuscripts themselves. In group 1 the division into thirty *ajzā'*, to facilitate the reading of the entire Qur'ān in one lunar month, and such liturgical aids as the marking of the

Table 1. Distinguishing Features of Two Groups of “Kūfic” Qurʾān Manuscripts

group 1	group 2
horizontal format	vertical format
relatively small format	large format
divided into <i>ajzāʾ</i>	not divided into <i>ajzāʾ</i>
illuminated <i>sūrah</i> openings in gold, sepia, and dark brown (occasionally with the addition of green), with titles in gold with reserved contours	polychrome ornamental <i>sūrah</i> endings without gold and with no titles; some gold in frontispieces and borders of opening pages of Qurʾān (one surviving example)
liturgical divisions and verse groups marked	liturgical divisions and verse groups not marked
odd number of lines per page	even numbers of lines per page
fairly wide line spacing and taller vertical letters	tighter line spacing and squatter vertical letters
generally uniform stroke for letter bodies and connecting lines	base-line stroke slightly thinner than stroke for letter bodies
tail of <i>qāf</i> in form of small <i>dāl/dhāl</i>	tail of <i>qāf</i> sickle-shaped
<i>yāʾ</i> with any of three tails	<i>yāʾ</i> with either of two tails
upper stroke of <i>jīm/hāʾ/khāʾ</i> curved; preceding connected letters always raised on secondary base line	upper stroke of <i>jīm/hāʾ/khāʾ</i> straight

*sajdahs*, are evidence that these manuscripts were intended for use in mosques. Perhaps also the inclusion of the numbers of verses in the *sūrah* headings was primarily for the convenience of members of the *ʿulamāʾ*, who would have been abreast of the alternative numbering systems current at the time. The manuscripts of group 2, though they lack all these features, are of a monumental size implying that they were intended to be set on large *kursīs*, probably in mosques; the frontispieces of Šanʿāʾ 25–33.1, which contain actual representations of mosques, also suggest such a setting.

That the secretaries, on the other hand, were generally not even very devout is the conclusion to be drawn from another *Kitāb al-kutūb*, composed by ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Baghdādī in the mid third/ninth century. In his description of the kinds of learning necessary for a good secretary the “Islamic sciences”—knowledge of the Qurʾān, traditions, religious law, and so on—are conspicuously absent.<sup>104</sup> He also recounted an anecdote in which one of his predecessors, Sālim b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, secretary to the Umayyad caliph Hishām (105–25/724–43), presided over literary discussions in the mosque at Manbij.<sup>105</sup> Dominique Sourdel has commented that when ʿAbdallāh himself was writing, a century later, “la caste des Secrétaires n’a plus aucun rapport alors avec les *ṣayḥs*.”<sup>106</sup> In fact, ʿAbdallāh’s great contemporary al-Jāḥiẓ (ca. 160–255/776–869), in his *Risālah fi dhamm al-kitāb*, attacked the secretaries for their pretension and ignorance of, even contempt for, religion: “The proof is that no one has ever seen a secretary make of the Qurʾān his bedtime reading or of its commentaries the basis of his wisdom or of religious

law his specialization or of the knowledge of traditions the foundations of his science.”<sup>107</sup>

The gulf that existed between Qurʾān copyists and secretaries appears to be confirmed by other evidence as well. ʿAlī ibn Khalaf, a secretary in the *diwān* under the late Fātimids whose *Mawādd al-bayān* is known only through citations by al-Qalqashandī, commented that, though copyists of the Qurʾān and the *warraqūn* customarily broke words at the ends of lines, the competent scribe would plan his work so that such breaks were unnecessary.<sup>108</sup> Somewhat earlier Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (act. Baghdad late fourth/tenth century), a student of Ibn Abī Dāʾūd, claimed that brown ink was never used by good scribes;<sup>109</sup> brown ink was clearly preferred, however, by the copyists of “Kūfic” Qurʾāns. This evidence bears out Ibn Durustūyah’s distinction among the different types of scribes; in fact, it is possible to discern in the cited comments by secretaries, with their different professional interests and broader intellectual connections, an underlying disdain for the practices of Qurʾān copyists. As it was the secretaries who composed the manuals on good writing that survive, it is clear that their prescriptions can provide only oblique, and largely negative, evidence related to early Qurʾānic scripts.<sup>110</sup>

### Chronological Considerations

Even those who copied the Qurʾān professionally worked in two quite different milieux: Those who wrote in “Kūfic” were religious scholars who specialized in



copying the sacred text on parchment; those who wrote in "broken Kūfic" on paper served a variety of patrons, for whom they copied a broad range of texts. Although "broken Kūfic" was not fully developed until the fourth/tenth century, there is at present no convincing evidence that these two groups of copyists worked in direct chronological succession. 'Alī ibn Khalaf's observation in the late Fāṭimid period that Qur'ān copyists were still breaking words at the ends of lines, a practice found only in the earliest dated examples of "broken Kūfic," suggests that "Kūfic" Qur'āns may have continued to be written for some time after the turn of the fifth/eleventh century, which has been considered the *terminus ante quem* for their production.<sup>111</sup> This possibility has further implications for the internal chronology of the "Kūfic" manuscripts themselves. It must be reiterated that no external evidence so far known—no colophon, *waqf* notice, or other datable element—permits a definitive attribution of any extant Qur'ān manuscript or group to a period earlier than the third/ninth century. Chronological conclusions must thus be based, at least partly, on formal analyses of script and ornament. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, a three-phase sequence of development from *sūrah* divisions without ornaments to full-fledged headings with *sūrah* titles has long been assumed; if that assumption is valid, then the manuscripts of group 2 must be considered to belong to the phase preceding that of group 1.

In assessing the validity of this simple model, one detail of the manuscripts in group 1 seems particularly significant. Each *sūrah* heading includes, along with the title, the number of verses in the *sūrah*, written in words but in a sequence—hundreds, tens, and units—that is contrary to standard Arabic usage (see Fig. 5, 1. 5 *sittūn wa arba' āyāt*), as codified by the grammarians who dominated Muslim intellectual circles in the third-fourth/ninth-tenth centuries and as reflected in the earliest known inscriptions and documents of the Islamic period. This feature suggested to Abbott a "ritualistic or sacred mode of expression which is conservative and often archaic." As she pointed out, numbers were sometimes expressed in this way in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry and were common in other Semitic languages spoken in the areas where Arabic developed, but in the Islamic period such numbers occurred only in divisions of the Qur'ān.<sup>112</sup> C. F. Beckingham explored the question in greater depth, demonstrating that numbers were indeed typically written in this fashion in most Semitic languages; he concluded that the custom of writing the units after the tens

not be surprising to find that it occurred in Arabic also at a time when the rules of grammar had not been formulated or any attempt made to standardize the usages of the language. . . . [I]t is in the verse-counts of the Qur'āns and as a poetic licence that the practice in question survives in classical Arabic.<sup>113</sup>

In view of the linguistic evidence, the central question perhaps ought to be why the archaic sequence of writing numbers was reversed in the early Islamic period.<sup>114</sup> For the purposes of this study, however, the important point is that the practice of including verse counts in archaic form in *sūrah* headings must have been introduced at a time and place where this tradition of numeration had remained in continuous use; it is unlikely that it had died out and was then revived only after the opposite system had become firmly established, as it had done in the first decades of the Islamic period. Furthermore, it would have had to survive as a *written* tradition, for there is no evidence that verse counts, or even the titles of *sūrahs*, have ever been included in the oral recitation of the Qur'ān. But, if divisions with written verse counts were in use almost from the beginning of the Islamic period,<sup>115</sup> then there was no substantial interval in which two successive earlier phases without written *sūrah* divisions would fit. The inevitable conclusion is that the accepted model does not provide a viable chronological framework for "Kūfic" Qur'ān manuscripts.

Although at first this negative conclusion may appear to represent a step backward in the study of these puzzling manuscripts, in fact it helps to clear the way for new approaches. It may now be possible to construct more firmly grounded criteria for determining the origins of particular manuscripts, criteria that must certainly include paleographic and codicological features, as well as details of ornament. As for groups 1 and 2 in particular, it has already been suggested that they represent two distinct traditions of copying the Qur'ān; their clear-cut differences on a number of dimensions are more consonant with production in two geographical centers, rather than in two successive phases of a single line of development.

Furthermore, some significant geographical indicators can be drawn from the evidence presented up to this point. Among the criteria that distinguish group 1, several are related to the written text itself and its divisions (see Table 1). In the first three centuries of Islam the main arenas for discussion and elaboration of aspects of the Qur'ānic tradition, particularly as related to the written text, were Iraq and the Hījaz. The *ajzā'*, for example, were introduced by al-Ḥajjāj while he was governor of Iraq; although they seem to have found some limited acceptance there, they apparently did not become widespread until much later.<sup>116</sup> Variant readings of the Qur'ānic text, as represented by the

occurs not only in languages which are philologically very close to Arabic, but in at least three which were at one time or another spoken in some part of Arabia, Sabaeen, Nabataean and Ethiopic. . . . It would

different systems of colored dots, proliferated until the reforms of Ibn Mujāhid at Baghdad. Furthermore, of the seven canonical readings adopted as part of those reforms four had originated in Iraq, two in the Ḥijāz, and one in Damascus; of the “three after the seven” and the “four after the ten” five were developed in Iraq, two in the Ḥijāz.<sup>117</sup> Finally, there is the problem of the old Semitic form in which the verse counts of group 1 are given. Although it has not yet been possible to determine where this tradition remained vital, there are indications that the correct numbers of verses were an object of lively interest and inspired a considerable literature, again particularly in Iraq and the Ḥijāz. Specifically, Ibn al-Nadīm provided a substantial list of works on the “numbers” of Qur’ānic verses by writers from al-Madīnah, al-Kūfah, and al-Baṣrah, as well as three by Syrians.<sup>118</sup> Such textual indications are not in themselves conclusive, but they do strongly suggest that group 1, in which all these features can be found, belongs to a tradition that was evolving in Iraq or al-Madīnah. In 1941 Abbott criticized Arthur Jeffery for being “unable to view this problem of Koranic scripts on its own merits and apart from the parallel problem of Koranic texts,”<sup>119</sup> but with the passage of time scholars have come to recognize, on the contrary, that isolating one aspect of a body of material from its context is methodologically unsound. In fact, when so many liturgical features associated with a particular

area are found in a particular subcategory of manuscripts, it is impossible to escape the hypothesis that those manuscripts were written in the same area. The suggestion that group 1 was produced in the Ḥijāz or Iraq—the latter, as a center of both art and patronage, is the more probable—thus demands further investigation. Group 2, on the other hand, appears to represent a “school” of copyists who did not concern themselves with the same set of textual and liturgical issues.

A final attempt at identifying more precisely the centers where these separate traditions flourished must await the analysis of ornament to be presented in Part II of this article, but two important conclusions have already emerged. First, the traditional chronological model for “Kūfic” Qur’ān manuscripts, based on a presumed three-phase evolution in the organization of ornament, must be discarded, and approximate dates for individual manuscripts must be established according to a broad array of criteria: paleographic, codicological, textual, and ornamental. Second, even the very limited comments offered here on such matters as vocalization and the writing of numbers are sufficient to reveal that, apart from description and commentary in Arabic sources, early manuscripts themselves constitute a body of material that, though barely exploited, is extremely promising as evidence for the early history of the Qur’ān as a written text.



## Notes

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1. Review of G. Vajda, *Album de paléographie arabe*, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1959, p. 58.
  2. For good critical reviews of early efforts in this area, see A. Grohmann, *Arabische Paläographie* (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Denkschriften, XCIV Abhandlung I. Forschungen zur islamischen Philologie und Kulturgeschichte, I, 2 pt.; Vienna, 1967–71), pt. 1, ch. 3; and J. Sourdél-Thomine, "*Khaṭṭ*," *El<sup>2</sup>*.
  3. Useful discussions of the associated problems can be found in G. Bergsträsser and O. Pretzl, *Die Geschichte des Qorāntexts*, v. 3 of T. Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, 2nd ed.; Leipzig, 1938; Grohmann, "The Problem of Dating Early Qurʾāns," *Der Islam*, v. 33, 1958, pp. 213–31; and F. Déroche, "Les écritures coraniques anciennes: Bilan et perspectives," *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, v. 48, 1980, pp. 207–24.
  4. J. G. C. Adler, *Descriptio Codicum quorundam Cuficorum partes Corani exhibentium in Bibliotheca Regia Hafniensi et ex eisdem de Scriptura Cufica Arabum observationes novae*, Altona (Hamburg), 1780, pp. 27–34.
  5. "Arabia," *El<sup>1</sup>*, p. 387.
  6. They are a bend to the right at the lower end of *alāf*, extended vertical strokes, and a moderate downward slant to the left; N. Abbott, *The Rise of the North Arabic Script and Its Qurʾānic Development, with a Full Description of the Qurʾān Manuscripts in the Oriental Institute*, Chicago, 1939, pp. 18–19, 21–23; see also B. Dodge, ed. and tr., *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm: A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture*, v. 1, New York, 1970, p. 10, n. 15.
  7. In fact, in Abbott's analysis the crucial difference between Hījāzī and Kūfīc script seems to have been that Kūfīc was written vertically rather than with a slant. For a major critique of her study and her reply, see A. Jeffery, Review of *The Rise of the North Arabic Script* . . . , *The Moslem World*, v. 30, 1940, pp. 191–98; and Abbott, "Arabic Paleography," *Ars Islamica*, v. 8, 1941, esp. pp. 73–79. See also Déroche, "Écritures," pp. 213–17. The general framework constructed by Abbott was adopted and somewhat refined by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, *Dirāsāt fī taʾrīkh al-khaṭṭ al-ʿarabī mundhu bidāyatihī ilā nihāyati-l-ʿaṣr al-umawī*, Beirut, 1972, pp. 36–37.
  8. For example, S. Ory, "Un nouveau type de muṣḥaf: Inventaire des Corans en rouleaux de provenance damasquine conservés à Istanbul," *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, v. 33, 1965, pp. 87–149; Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des Manuscrits, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes*, pt. 2. *Manuscrits musulmans*, v. 1, pt. 1. Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran aux origines de la calligraphie coranique*, Paris, 1983; and Déroche, "Collections de manuscrits anciens du Coran à Istanbul: Rapport préliminaire," *Etudes médiévales et patrimoine turc: Volume publié à l'occasion du centième anniversaire de la naissance de Kemal Atatürk*, Paris, 1983, pp. 145–65.
  9. The rationale for this approach has been outlined by Sourdél-Thomine, "*Khaṭṭ*," pp. 1117–18, who has also emphasized the deficiencies of relying exclusively on specialized texts about writing. A more explicit statement of the method can be found in Déroche, "Écritures," pp. 223–24.
  10. Bergsträsser and Pretzl, *Geschichte*, p. 259; Grohmann, "Problems of Dating," pp. 228–30.
  11. Sourdél-Thomine, "*Khaṭṭ*," p. 1118.
  12. Already in 1821 U. F. Kopp had observed: "Denn ich will den sehen, der, ohne die Schrift und Sprache ganz inne zu haben, das Ende der Wörter, wo ihm nicht etwa Final-Buchstaben oder die Nunnation helfen, bemerken kann. Die Zwischen-Räume sind ja auch eben so gross mitten in den Wörtern, als am Ende derselben"; *Bilder und Schriften der Vorzeit*, v. 2, Mannheim, 1821, pp. 295–96; see also G.-R. Puin, "Methods of Research on Qurʾānic Manuscripts—A Few Ideas," *Maṣāḥif Ṣanʿāʾ*, Kuwait, 1985, p. 11. Abbott, *Rise*, p. 26, n. 70, noted that in some sources connected letters are defined as "words" in the script called *mashq*; see especially Abū'l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Qalqashandī (*Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā fī ṣināʿat al-inshāʿ*, Cairo, n.d., v. 3, p. 140), who cited as authority the Fāṭimid secretary ʿAlī ibn Khalaf, author of *Mawādd al-bayān* (cf. W. Björkman, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Staatskanzlei im islamischen Ägypten*, Hamburg, 1928, p. 77).
  13. Initial and medial *kāf* is identical in form to *dāl/dhāl*, and it is possible for the reader to confuse these letters. In a given manuscript, however, though *dāl/dhāl* may frequently be rather extended and *kāf* contracted, when the two appear in close proximity, *kāf* is almost always noticeably wider (e.g., Fig. 12, ll. 1–4).
  14. In this connection, ʿAlī ibn Khalaf remarked that breaking words between lines (he was referring to the division of words between letter groups) was found mainly in Qurʾāns and in the work of "copyists" (*fī maṣāḥif al-ʿamma wa-khuṭūʿ al-warrāqīn*), as a result of insufficient space at the ends of lines. He recommended that the good "scribe" (*kātib*) apply his "eye" to drawing out letters earlier in the line to avoid the necessity for such divisions at the end (*wa min hunā aḥlāj al-kātib ilā l-naẓar fī dhālika bi'l-jamʿ wa-l-mashq min hīni shurūʿihī fī kitābatī awwal al-saṭr ʿalā mā taqaddam*; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, v. 3, p. 147).
  15. Déroche, *Catalogue*, p. 21, argued that "la facilité avec laquelle les scribes pouvaient allonger les ligatures de l'écriture" explains the relative rarity of this solution. He also assumed that the marker served as a kind of hyphen in words that had to be separated between lines. This observation seems incorrect in relation to some manuscripts, however. In 1410 in The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, for example, the marker occurs at the end of nearly all notably short lines; in some but not all instances words are broken at these points (see also Figs. 19, l. 11; 20, l. 18; and 21, l. 9). In the same manuscript

many words broken at the ends of lines are not marked in this way, even though the lines fall slightly short. It seems that the markers' main function was visual: to fill out exceptionally short lines, regardless of sense.

16. Déroche, *Catalogue*, p. 16; Déroche, "Collections," p. 146.
17. The term "Kūfic" was used by A. J. Arberry in *The Koran Illuminated: A Handlist of the Korans in the Chester Beatty Library*, Dublin, 1967, pp. xvi–xviii, 3–9. CBL 1405 consists of three folios from the famous "blue" Qurʾān; one of these folios shows rulings, as light lines against the dark surface of the parchment, but that folio is tinted a darker, more opaque blue than the other two and may have been restored at some point.
18. Déroche, *Catalogue*, p. 16, noted the same characteristic; see also Déroche, "Collections," p. 146.
19. The earliest comprehensive application of this method is S. Flury, *Islamische Schriftbänder Amida-Diarbekr X. Jahrhundert*, Basel and Paris, 1920, the reprint of two articles in *Syria*, v. 1, 1920, pp. 235–49, 318–28, with an appendix on inscriptions from Qayrawān, Mayyāfārqīn, and Tirmidh.
20. Flury, *Islamische Schriftbänder*, p. 8.
21. For references, see Sourdél-Thomine, "Khatt," p. 1117. Grohmann has used a variant of this approach in constructing comparative charts, drawn from groups of inscriptions and designed to demonstrate ornamental development in such particular features as hastae and rounded letters from the ʿAbbāsīd period onward; see *Arabische Paläographie*, v. 2, pp. 93–188 *passim*.
22. L. Volov (Colombek), "Plaited Kufic on Samanid Epigraphic Pottery," *Ars Orientalis*, v. 6, 1966, esp. pp. 109–13.
23. The letter body can be defined as an irreducible minimum form that remains unchanged whatever the position in the word and whatever appendages and ornamentation are added. See Volov, "Plaited Kufic," p. 109.
24. Déroche, *Catalogue*, p. 17, has noted this connection. That such echoing of forms was integral to this style of script is clear from manuscripts in which terminal *nūn* has a completely rounded tail, which is echoed in terminal *sīn*/*shīn* and *šād*/*qād*; see, for example, 1401 in The Chester Beatty Library (Fig. 14).
25. Variations in this letter have sometimes been used to define scripts; see especially the discussion of Abbott's definition of Hījāzī and Kūfic scripts in n. 6 above. Scope for such variations is, however, quite limited: The *alīf* is never altered (except in *lām-alīf*, which is more appropriately treated as a separate entity), regardless of position. It thus seems particularly ill suited to a diagnostic function.
26. There should be no confusion between these proportions and the fractional names of scripts like *thulth*, *thulthayn*, and *nisf*. According to one of al-Qalqashandī's sources, *Ṣubḥ*, v. 3, p. 48, the latter were defined by the width of the stroke in relation to that of the *ṭūmār* script, which was drawn with a pen (*qalam*) twenty-four horse hairs wide (*sic*); the stroke for *thulth* would thus be eight hairs wide and so on. See Abbott, *Rise*, p. 32.
27. There may have been systematic principles determining these variations, but, as they do not seem useful in distinguishing manuscript groups, they will not be explored here.
28. *Catalogue*, pp. 88–89, no. 76; pp. 52–53. The author is grateful to Dr. Déroche for information on the Istanbul fragments and to Dr. Stig Rasmussen for information on those in Copenhagen.
29. The connection between the Oxford and Dublin fragments was initially remarked by D. S. Rice in unpublished notes for a projected catalogue of the Qurʾān manuscripts in The Chester Beatty Library, which was unfortunately never completed. The author is grateful to Dr. David James for permission to photocopy his copy of these notes; the original is in the L. A. Mayer Memorial Institute for Islamic Art in Jerusalem. Marsh 178 is part of a gift of eastern manuscripts made to the library by Narcissus Marsh, Archbishop of Armagh, who died in 1713. It was first catalogued by J. Uri, *Bibliothecae Bodleianae Codicum Manuscriptorum Orientalium... Catalogus...*, Oxford, 1787, pt. 1, "Codices Manuscripti Arabici," p. 40, no. XVI; a sample of paleography from the manuscript was published by A. Nicoll in *Bibliothecae Bodleianae Codicum Manuscriptorum Orientalium...*, Oxford, 1835, pt. 2, v. 2, pl. I top, but, as it consisted of six lines copied from two folios, it had not previously been recognized that this manuscript has only five lines to the page and is in fact part of the Qurʾān under discussion. The original hand copy reproduced by Nicoll is bound with the manuscript.
30. The author wishes to express sincere thanks to Dr. Klaus Brisch and Dr. Elke Niewohner for generously providing a complete set of photographs of the Berlin fragment and to Dr. Jens Kröger for additional information; to Dr. Glenn Lowry and James Smith for making the Freer folios available for examination and to Dr. Esin Aul for assistance in obtaining a photograph of folio *ma*; and to Dr. Niewohner for information and references on the Wolfenbüttel manuscript.
31. W. Piper, *Die Welt der Araber in Büchern einer alten Bibliothek*, Braunschweig, 1983, p. 24, no. 1. Piper has compared this fragment with a single page of five lines published by Kopp, *Bilder*, p. 288. The script is indeed very similar. The illustrated text passage is from Sūrah L:4–6, which is not otherwise extant in CBL 1407 *et al*. The problem of identification is complicated, however, by the fact that, according to Kopp, p. 287, the letters and lines were illustrated in their original size; if that is correct, then the text page is too small to have been part of the type manuscript. Unfortunately, Kopp gave no indication of where he had seen the fragment, though it seems to have been in a German collection.
32. Golius mentioned, in *Arabicae Linguae Tyrocinium, id est, Thomae Erpenii Grammatica Arabica*, Leiden, 1656, p. 183, two fragments of Qurʾāns written in "very old characters" on parchment that belonged to him; cf. J. H. Hottinger, *Promtuarium; sive, Bibliotheca Orientalis: Catalogum, sive, Centurias aliquot, tam Authorum, quam librorum Hebraicorum, Syriacorum, Arabicorum, Aegyptiacorum, Aethiopicorum, etc.*, Heidelberg, 1658, pp. 105–6. Marsh is known to have purchased,



through Edward Bernard, a large portion of Golius' collection, which was sold at auction in 1696, more than twenty-five years after the Dutch scholar's death in 1667; see M. McCarthy, *All Graduates and Gentlemen: Marsh's Library*, Dublin, 1980, pp. 25, 47, 49; cf. T. Houtsma, *Uit de oostersche Correspondentie van Th. Erpenius, Jac. Golius en Lev. Warner: Eene Bijdrage tot de Geschiedenis van de Beoefening der oostersche Letteren in Nederland*, Amsterdam, 1887, pp. 54–55. In the auction catalogue, *Catalogus Insignium in omni facultate, linguisque, Arabica, Persica, Turcica, Chinensi &c. Librorum M.SS. quos Doctissimus Clarissimusque Vir D. Jacobus Golius . . . Quorum auctio habebitur in Aedibus Johannis du Vivie, Bibliopolae . . .*, Leiden, 1696, one of two "Kūfic" Qur'āns listed, no. 1 on p. 23, is described in Arabic as "a fragment of the Qur'ān in large Kūfic script on parchment" and in Latin as "Fragmentum Corani litteris, Coufi dictis, conscriptum sub membrana." The author is grateful to Dr. J. J. Witkam for copies of this catalogue and an earlier inventory of Golius' collection and for information that an auctioneer's note on Marsh 178, "N. 1 Inc. qto.," identifies it with this entry in the sale catalogue.

33. That such "improvements" have been perpetrated on early Qur'ān manuscripts is clear from examples like 45.16 in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. This single folio contains thirteen lines of dark brown ink per page, the text measuring 18.8–19.3 x 29–30.05 cm.; the text is XXI:104–XXII:2. The parchment has been tinted a dark blue, now quite faded, with rather fuzzy contour paneling in reserve around the letters. In 1984 Dr. Atul suggested that the tint might be a modern addition. Subsequently, it was possible to identify this folio with a fragment of twenty folios in The Chester Beatty Library, 1401 (see Fig. 14), which contains XIII:34–41, XV:29–49, XVI:14–26, 61–75, 81–90, XVII:29–99, and XVIII:34–69, 89–110. The dimensions of the text page are identical, as are the distinctive ribbon-like terminals, the triple brown strokes following verses, and the geometric ornaments in four colors (red, green, ocher, brown) following each tenth verse. The Dublin folios, however, have not been tinted and thus lack the concomitant contouring around the letters. Indeed, there is still another folio from this manuscript in the Freer collection, 29.72, containing X:24–31, which is also untinted. Furthermore, the script on the tinted side of 45.16 has been retraced incorrectly in several places (all terminal *mīms* redrawn as *wāus* and the words *ḥamlīn ḥamlahā wa tarā al-nās sukārā wa mā hum bi-sukārā* changed into nonsensical *amlīn ḥamlahu aurā al-nāmin sukārā wa ā huwa bi-sukār*), and letters can clearly be seen to have been erased (see illustration in Atul, *Art of the Arab World*, Washington, D.C., 1975, pp. 16–17). These errors and alterations seem to reflect a modern reworking for the market rather than a pious restoration from an earlier date.
34. Unfortunately, it is not possible to draw firm conclusions about the place from which the two fragments that belonged to Golius were brought to Europe. The Copenhagen fragments cannot be traced back earlier than 1780, when Adler, *Descriptio*, p. 22, mentioned ms. 5; cf. *Codices Orientales Bibliothecae Regiae Hafniensis jussu et auspiciis regis enumerati et descripti: Pars altera, Codices Hebraicos et Arabicos Continentes*, Copenhagen, 1851, pp. iii, 42–43. The seven leaves in Gotha were brought to Europe by U. J. Seetzen around the turn of the nineteenth century; see J. H. Moeller, *Catalogus Librorum tam manuscriptorum quam impressorum qui jussu Divi Augusti Ducis Saxo-Gothani a Beato Seetzenio in Oriente Empti in Bibliotheca Gothana asservantur Sumptibus Divi Friederici, Ducis Saxo-Gothani*, v. 1, Gotha, 1825, p. iii, and Moeller, *Paläographische Beiträge aus den Herzöglichen Sammlungen in Gotha*, v. 1, Erfurt, 1844, pls. IX top, X bottom. It seems no longer possible to match Moeller's descriptions with Seetzen's own numbers; cf. Seetzen, *Verzeichniss der für die orientalische Sammlung in Gotha zu Damask, Jerusalem u.s.w. angekauften orientalischen Manuscripte und gedruckten Werke, Kunst- und Naturproducte u.s.w.*, Leipzig, 1810, *passim*, esp. p. 30, no. 1490. The folios in Paris were collected by J. L. Asselin de Cherville in Egypt in the early nineteenth century and came into the Bibliothèque Nationale (then the Bibliothèque Royale) in 1833; M. de Slane, Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des Manuscrits, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes*, Paris, 1883–95, p. ii. CBL 1407 was purchased from F. R. Martin after 1912. According to information supplied by Dr. Kröger, Berlin I.2211 was acquired by gift in 1912; it had been part of the estate of Adalbert Freiherr von Lanna of Prague, who died in 1909. It is probable that both the Dublin and Berlin fragments had come from Istanbul. Not only do they belong to a *juz'* of which the larger part is in the Aya Sofya collection, but also Martin is known to have sold a number of manuscripts that had been in Istanbul, including several other manuscripts in The Chester Beatty Library. For wry but generally undocumented comments on Martin's activities, see S. C. Welch, "Private Collectors and Islamic Arts of the Book," *Treasures of Islam*, London, 1985, p. 26; and G. D. Lowry, with S. Nemazee, *A Jeweler's Eye: Islamic Arts of the Book from the Veuer Collection*, Washington, D.C., 1988, p. 31. No information on the origin of the Istanbul fragments themselves is available (Déroche, personal communication). The folios in Washington were purchased from the New York dealer Hagop Kevorkian in 1937.
35. The text included is as follows: II:22–30, 86–91, 93–95 (Paris, ff. 1–8); 191–232, 233 (Washington); 259–68 (Paris, ff. 9–16); III:93–101 (Paris, ff. 17–20); 102–3 (Copenhagen XLII [6c], f. 4); 159–64, V: 83–90, VI: 91–93, 138–47, IX: 87–89, XI: 46–80, XII:43–50, XV:1–27, 80–XVI:10 (Paris, ff. 21–64); XVII:19–25 (Gotha 449); 29–31, 41–46, 51–55, XVIII: 32–50, 70–73 (Paris, ff. 65, 67–79); 97–109 (Topkapı Sarayı, ff. 14–17); XX:102–7, 120–23 (Topkapı Sarayı, ff. 18–19); XXI:14–18 (Paris, f. 80); 24–27, 38–40, 53–59 (Gotha 452); XXIII:7–15, 32–38 (Paris, ff. 81–84); 50–XXIV:26 (Copenhagen XL [5]); 28–51 (Copenhagen XLII [6c], f. 5); 54–57 (Paris, ff. 85–86); 59–60 (Copenhagen XLII [6c], f. 6); 60–61, XXV:1–3, 64–75, XXVI:2–5, 14–19, 71–77, 104–9, XXVII:40–42 (Paris, ff. 87–96, 66); *juz'* illuminations (Berlin, f. 22, Dublin, f. 1); XXIX:44–45 (Dublin, f. 1); 45–68 (Aya Sofya, ff. 1–11); XXX:1–24 (Berlin, ff. 8–15, 19–20); 25–XXXI:1–34 (Aya Sofya, ff. 12–47); 34–XXXII:1 (Dublin, f. 2); 1–17 (Aya Sofya, ff. 48–54); 20–XXXIII:heading, 3–9 (Berlin, ff. 1–2, 16–17, 21, 18, 3–6); 9–30 (Aya Sofya, ff. 55–67); 30–*juz'* illuminations (Dublin, ff. 3–4); XXXVII:114–21, 159–63, 167–79 (Wolfenbüttel, ff. 1–5); XXXVIII:3–8 (Paris, ff. 97–98); 13–18 (Wolfenbüttel, f. 6); 18–72, 81–XXXIX:2, 5–7, 18–20 (Oxford); 21–29, XLII:30–48, LII:11–47, LIII:21–LIV:1–45, XCII:14–21, XCIII:heading (Paris, ff. 99–141).
36. That is, one of thirty equal divisions of the Qur'ān. Al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf, Umayyad governor of Iraq in 75–95/694–714, was apparently the first to order that the Qur'ān be divided into equal parts, called *ajzā'* (sing. *juz'*). The earliest source for this information appears to be Abū Bakr 'Abdallāh ibn Abī Dā'ūd Sulaymān al-Sijistānī (230–316/844–929), *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif*:

- see Jeffery, ed., *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qurʾān: The Old Codices*, Leiden, 1937, pp. 119–20. Thirtieths, however, are not among the fractional divisions mentioned by him. In the fifth/eleventh century al-Ghazālī, *Ihyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, v. 1, Cairo, n.d., p. 277, reported that al-Hajjāj had brought together a group of Qurʾān reciters to count the words and letters of the Qurʾān in order to divide it into thirty *ajzāʾ* of equal size and to determine other fractional divisions. The author knows of no earlier version of this report. That division into thirtieths was already practiced in the second–third/eighth–ninth centuries is confirmed, however, by Ibn al-Nadīm’s mention of a work entitled *Kitāb ajzāʾ thalāthīn* by Abū Bakr ibn ʿAyyāsh (d. 192/808), *Fihrist*, ed. G. Flügel, v. 1, Leipzig, 1871, p. 36; Dodge, *Fihrist*, v. 1, p. 80; v. 2, p. 970.
37. In the Cairo edition the twenty-first *juzʾ* begins with Sūrah XXIX:46 and ends with XXXIII:30. The copyist of the manuscript followed a different division of *ajzāʾ*, however, in which *juzʾ* 21 begins with XXIX:44. Curiously, no early source seems to specify the divisions between thirtieths, but clearly, like the other divisions described by Ibn Abī Dāʾūd’s sources, they varied within a narrow range; Jeffery, *Materials*, pp. 121–22, 125–30. Both pages of illumination at the end of *juzʾ* 21 were published in Martin, *The Miniature Painting and Painters of Persia, India and Turkey from the 8th to the 18th Century*, v. 2, London, 1912, pl. 233, bottom left and right; one of the illuminated opening pages (CBL 1407, f. 1a) appeared in Martin, *A History of Oriental Carpets before 1800*, v. 1, Vienna, 1908, p. 10, fig. 11. In this article “a” refers to the side of the folio read first, that is, the verso, and “b” to the other side, the recto.
  38. Four from CBL 1407, twenty-two from Berlin I.2211, and sixty-seven from Aya Sofya 23 in Istanbul.
  39. No technical analysis of a “parchment” Qurʾān appears to have been published. Reports that particular manuscripts have been written on gazelle skin should thus be viewed with skepticism; see, e.g., *Fihrist al-kutub al-ʿarabiyyah al-mawjūdah biʾl-kitābkhānah al-khidiwīyah*, v. 1, Cairo, 1310/1893, pp. 1–3; M. Bahramī Farzand and A. Khān, *Rāhnāmā-yi ganjīnah-yi Qurʾān dar Mūzah-yi Īrān-i Bāstān*, pt. 2. M. Bayānī, *Fihrist-i Qurʾānhā wa qaṭaʿāt-āz Qurʾān-i majīd kih dar ganjīnah-be-maʿrad-i namāyish gūdhārdah shudah ast*, v. 2, Tehran, 1327/1949, p. 2, no. 2. Cf. Karabacek, “Arab Palaeography,” *Weinzer Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, v. 20, 1906, p. 135, n. 4.
  40. The practice of measuring the distance between the bases of the first and last lines on each page, introduced by Déroche (*Catalogue*, pp. 16, 19), has been followed here. It should be emphasized, however, that the dimensions are not uniform either vertically or horizontally. Ranges of variation have therefore been given, though they may not encompass the possible extremes within each manuscript.
  41. These dots have a bronze tone that may have resulted from mixing green with brown ink. Without technical analysis it is impossible to determine the cause of this variation, but it is not unique to this Qurʾān.
  42. They are XVI (Paris), XXIV (Copenhagen XL [5]), XXX (Berlin), XXXI (Aya Sofya), XXXII (Dublin), XXXIII (Berlin), XXXIX (Oxford), LIV (Paris), XCIII (Paris).
  43. The exceptions are Copenhagen XL (5), f. 18b (see Fig. 5), and Paris ff. 61a and 141a (see Déroche, *Manuscripts*, p. 88), where only marginal palmettes occur.
  44. Visual examination suggests that the sepia color was obtained by diluting the dark brown ink used for the text, which was almost certainly made from gall nuts; without analysis, however, this impression cannot be confirmed. See M. Zerdoun Bat-Yehouda, *Les encres noires au Moyen Age (jusqu’à 1600)*, Paris, 1983, pp. 123–51, esp. p. 132; Grohmann, *Arabische Paläographie*, v. 1, pp. 128–29; Déroche, *Catalogue*, p. 20.
  45. The *sajdahs* fall at the ends of VII:206, XIII:15, XVI:50, XVII:109, XIX:58, XXII:18, XXII:77, XXV:60, XXVII:26, XXXII:15, XXXVIII:24, XLI:38, LIII:62, and LXXXIV:21.
  46. Jeffery, *Materials*, pp. 119–22, 127. The sevenths appear not to have been indicated in this manuscript, but very few of the possible alternative passages mentioned by Ibn Abī Dāʾūd are preserved in the extant portions of the text.
  47. Normally the heading and the panel of decoration framing it take the equivalent of two lines of text, which would have left room for only three lines on this page.
  48. This fragment consists of three folios containing XXII:77–78, the end of *juzʾ* 17, with accompanying illuminations, which were published by Martin in *Miniature Painting*, v. 1, pl. 233a; see also Arberry, *Koran*, pl. 20. It was purchased from Martin sometime after 1912; cf. n. 34 above.
  49. It consists of twenty-one folios containing the illumination at the beginning of *juzʾ* 20 and XXVII:57–85, XXVIII:28–XXIX:11. In the Cairo edition *juzʾ* 20 begins with XXVII:58. This fragment came to the library from the collection of R. Meyer Riefstahl in 1926. Its connection with CBL 1421 was first noted by D. S. Rice, *The Unique Ibn al-Bawwāb Manuscript in the Chester Beatty Library*, Dublin, 1955, p. 2, n. 7, though he seems to have been aware of only one folio.
  50. It consists of thirty-nine folios containing IX:110–X:109, with illuminations; see Déroche, “Collections,” pp. 147–48.
  51. This single illuminated folio came to Istanbul with the collection of Qurʾān fragments salvaged from the Great Mosque of Damascus after the disastrous fire of 1893. See Déroche, “Collections,” pp. 148–49; Sourdell-Thomine, “Nouveaux documents sur l’histoire religieuse et sociale de Damas au Moyen Age,” *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, v. 32, 1964, p. 1–25; Sourdell-Thomine, “A propos des documents de la grande mosquée de Damas conservés à Istanbul: Résultats de la seconde enquête,” *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, v. 33, 1965, pp. 73–85.
  52. This fragment also consists of a single folio; Abūʾl-Faraj al-ʿUsh et al., *Catalogue du Musée National de Damas publié à l’occasion de son cinquantenaire*, Damascus, 1969, p. 223, A.338, fig. 127. It contains only a *wagf* notice, to which O. Pretzl referred in Bergsträsser and Pretzl, *Geschichte*, p. 270. See also Y. Eche, *Les bibliothèques arabes publiques et semi-publiques en Mésopotamie, en Syrie et en Egypte au Moyen Age*, Damascus, 1967, pp. 136–37.
  53. Déroche, “Collections,” p. 147.
  54. Déroche, “Collections,” p. 146, comments that gatherings of



ten sheets are most common in the old Qurʾān manuscripts of the Topkapı Sarayı collection, without, however, giving specific information on EH 16; cf. Karabacek, "Zur orientalischen Altertumskunde, VI. Ein Koranfragment des IX. Jahrhunderts aus dem Besitze des Seldschuckensultans Kaikubad," *Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte*, v. 184, no. 3, 1917, p. 11, in which he remarks that, "wie üblich," the gatherings consist of ten sheets.

55. EH 16, f. 39b, unpublished; TIM 47, f. 1a, Déroche, "Collections," pl. 1b; CBL 1421, f. 3b, Déroche, "Collections," pl. Va; A.338, al-ʿUsh *et al.*, *Catalogue*, fig. 127.
56. Déroche, "Collections," p. 158.
57. "Collections," pp. 151–53, 164–65, pls. IIb–IIIb. On the fragment TIM 990, f. 2r (pl. IIb), and a page from the Dār al-Kutub, Cairo, illustrated by Moritz, "Arabia," *Elʿ*, pl. IV bottom (cf. p. 388), the *waqf* notices at the top show obvious attempts to emulate the style of the Qurʾān, with elongated connecting lines, *alif* turned to the right at the bottom, and the pinpoint opening in *wāw*; the scribe was betrayed, however, by such anomalies as the form of the *hāʾ* and the tiny proportions of *mīm* in relation to other looped letters.
58. Déroche, "Collections," pp. 154–55, pl. IVa. The letter forms generally imitate those of "Kūfic," especially terminal *qāf* and *dād* and the raising of connected letters before *jīm* in *najm* and *masjid*, which has, however, been clumsily handled; on the other hand, both horizontal and vertical tails occur on terminal *mīm*, the *dāl/dhāl* is very small, *hāʾ* is hollow, and the proportions are generally inconsistent, an indication that the scribe was attempting an unfamiliar hand.
59. See, for example, a copy of Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām's *Gharīb al-ḥadīth* dated 252/866, in the library of the University of Leiden, M. J. de Goeje, "Beschreibung einer alten Handschrift von Abū ʿObaid's *Ḡarīb al-ḥadīth*," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, v. 18, 1864, p. 781 and pl. facing p. 788; and a copy of the Gospels dated A.D. 897 in the library of the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, A. S. Atiya, *The Arabic Manuscripts of Mount Sinai*, Baltimore, 1955, p. 4, no. 72, and pl. VI. A partial inventory of the distinguishing features of this script includes relatively little spacing between letter groups, considerable variation in the thickness of strokes, diagonal or curving ascenders on tall letters, terminal *alif* with a small vertical point at the bottom, small proportions of *dāl/dhāl*, angular ligatures, and preceding letters usually joined to the base-line stroke of *jīm/hāʾ/khāʾ*. Some of these features can be said also to characterize the Qurʾānic script known as "broken Kūfic" or "Persian Kūfic"; cf. Déroche's discussion of "Kūfic/naskhī," which he prefers to call "broken cursive," "Collections," pp. 158–60. It is the author's belief, based on principles of page layout, spacing, relations among letters, variation in strokes, and so on, that "broken cursive" is a stylization of the particular third-/ninth-century cursive script outlined here and cannot be viewed as a direct development from "Kūfic." A separate study of the progressive course of this stylization is in preparation.
60. CBL 1406, a single folio with a rectangular illuminated

panel on one side, is probably from the ornamental closing of a *juzʿ*. On the reverse is a library stamp with the *tughra* of the Ottoman Sultan Bayezit II. The folio was purchased from Martin, who published a photograph in 1912; *Miniature Painting*, pl. 234 (cf. Arberry, *Koran*, pl. 13). The illuminated panel measures 2.6 x 13 cm., too small for it to have been part of the type manuscript. Arberry, p. 8, reported that the five folios of CBL 1422 include fragments of two manuscripts, one with six lines to a page, the other with fifteen. In fact, three manuscripts are represented: folio 1 (1422A) with six lines of text on each side, and folios 4–5 (1422C) with fifteen; folios 2–3, however, contain seven lines on a text page and thus constitute 1422B. In this fragment there is an ornamental band framing the opening to Sūrah XVIII, and the ends of verses are marked with six-petaled rosettes in gold with red and green dots. The larger rosettes after ten verses (no five-verse divisions fall in this fragment) and marking the *sajdah* at XVII:109 are in gold and dark blue, a color not previously noted in group 1; cf. D. James, *Qurʾans and Bindings from The Chester Beatty Library: A Facsimile Exhibition*, London, 1980, p. 18, no. 5. The text page measures 11.8–11.9 x 19.6–20.2 cm. It contains a passage from XVII:107–XVIII:2. A note in the modern binding says "May 30, 1938, Cairo," but it may apply only to 1422C. James has identified fragments in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Mūzah-yi Īrān-i Bāstān, Tehran, 4289; and the Pārs Museum, Shiraz, as parts of the same manuscript as CBL 1422. Only two pages of the Tehran fragment appear to have been published: one, containing the heading of Sūrah LXXV, in Bayānī, *Fihrist*, pl. 2, the other, containing the end of Sūrah VII and the heading for Sūrah VIII, in *The Arts of Islam*, London, 1976, p. 316, no. 499, and M. Lings, *The Quranic Art of Calligraphy and Illumination*, London, 1976, p. 18 and pl. V. Close examination of the photographs suggests, however, that, though the Tehran pages contain the equivalent of seven lines, they are not part of the same manuscript as CBL 1422B. The ornamental heading for Sūrah VIII, which includes green but not blue, is rather crude, with simple sawtoothed and crook-shaped leaves in reserve on a dark-brown ground and gilding that has been rather haphazardly applied. Furthermore, the letters are surrounded by a white contour with a heavy gold outline, which at one point cuts across the contour between letters, a feature that appears unique. The title and verse count for Sūrah LXXV are in reserve and outlined with gold against an equally coarse ground. The verse endings are marked by pyramids of six disks. In CBL 1422B, on the other hand, the ornamentation is rather fine. In the *sūrah* heading the precisely drawn foliage is in gold against a dark-brown ground, with continuous reserve contouring of the gold script, unbroken by the gold contour line. The verse endings are marked by gold rosettes. The letter forms in the texts of the two manuscripts also differ. In 1422B the *alif* is slenderer, without the extreme thickening of the stroke at the curve that characterizes the Tehran pages, where the same tendency to blur letter forms by means of thickened strokes is visible in the *nūn*. Furthermore, the downward-curving stroke of initial *ʿayn/ghayn* and *jīm/hāʾ/khāʾ* is joined to the base line in a tapering point, rather than the sharply defined blunt end characteristic of CBL 1422B. The script in the latter manuscript also has a slight forward slant that is absent from the Tehran Qurʾān, which seems, however, to have been copied by more than one hand. The Shiraz fragment to which James refers has apparently not been

published; that in Boston, though much finer than the Tehran pages, also does not appear to be from the same manuscript as CBL 1422B.

61. Déroche classified the Paris portion of the type manuscript in his group D I, which contains a total of fifty-three fragmentary Qur'āns; *Catalogue*, pp. 84–97. Some of them will surely turn out to belong to group 1.
62. Arberry, *Koran*, p. 4, no. 31, incorrectly reported the number of lines per page as nineteen. The manuscript comprises the following visible portions of the text: II: 31–53, 62–67, 78–96, 107–12, 118–94, 283–III:59, 82–95, 189–IV:119, 162–V:3–22, 75–VI:88, 94–147, 155–VII:164, 173–IX:80, 88–X:44, 53–70, 83–102, 109–XIII:43, XIV:2–XV:46, 75–XVI:77, XIX:60–XX:125, XXXII:19–31, XXXIII:1–XXXVIII:5, 16–73, XXXIX:1–9, 22–24, 39–50, 52–57, 72–XL:7, 22–29, 39–47, 62–78, XLI:1–15, 38–48, 54–XLII:15, LXI:12–LXIII:6, LXVI:10–LXX:42, LXXVI:22–LXXX:43, LXXXI:1–LXXXII:22, LXXXVI:1–LXXXVII:19. See also n. 66 below.
63. Moritz, ed., *Arabic Palaeography: A Collection of Arabic Texts from the First Century of the Hijra till the Year 1000*, Cairo, 1905, pls. 19–30, identified the Qur'ān only as from Fū'ah. Grohmann was apparently leaping to conclusions when he referred to the Qur'ān as from “the mosque” at Fū'ah; “Problems of Dating,” p. 215. Manuscript 1404 was formerly numbered K.3 in the Chester Beatty collection. Acquisition records of this collection do not appear to be extant, and it is thus often impossible to determine when and where a given manuscript was purchased. In this instance, however, correspondence files at the Library contain some clues. A typed list of manuscripts purchased from Dr. A. S. Yahuda includes the following entry under the date March 21, 1928: “large Quran, vellum, Cufic, 178–180 leaves. Circa early 2nd cent. 20–25 headings, (like Omar Quran, Cairo). 9 leaves sent on appro. to Venice. Transaction, April 6th circa.” In a letter from Yahuda to Beatty, written (partly in code) from Cairo on March 21, 1928, the manuscript is more fully described: “Am offered Cufic house [Qur'ān] second century measuring nearly your Mameluk house. Shall send Venice details and leaves. . . . It was a very hard task to get this Coran, as the owners belong to a five centuries old noble family and are not in great need of money. Anyhow they eventually consented to sell it and I think that it is a very happy occasion, the more so as Cufic Corans in this size and in such good condition are extremely rare and known only in three or four copies altogether. It contains almost two thirds of the Coran and is without any shade of doubt from early in the second century A.H. if not of the first century A.H. as the script, the size and the designs and colours of the headings of the suras are very similar to those of the Coran in the Cairo Museum found in the old mosque of Omar the conqueror of Egypt [the mosque of 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀs in al-Fuṣṭāṭ], dating from the end of the first century (about 725 A.D.). It has about 178 or 180 leaves of vellum; 110 leaves are in perfect condition, the ink of only a few pages being faded; 50 leaves are more damaged or faded, and from 5 to 10 leaves are patched on one side with thick paper. There are from 20 to 25 headings of suras of different designs, 5 of which are slightly rubbed or damaged. At first I thought that in some of them the colours had been renewed, but comparing them with the sura headings of the above-mentioned Omar Coran I realised that it was not so but that the colours are preserved in their original state. It is very

remarkable indeed that, whereas the ink has faded away on many pages, the colours of the headings have not lost their brilliance. I must add that these colours are specially characteristic of the first two centuries and that it was only from the beginning of the third century that gold was used in the decoration of Corans. I think this description will be sufficient to give you a good idea of the whole Coran. Among the nine leaves you will find two which belong to the damaged leaves. You will also observe that the vellum is not uniformly thick; as a matter of fact many pages are even thinner than those sent to you. As to the binding, it is a wonderful specimen of the Mameluk time, with a flap and in very good condition.” Yahuda was clearly estimating the numbers of pages and decorated “sura headings,” which closely approximate those in CBL 1404; furthermore, although the condition of the manuscript is very much overstated, the information on the binding (see n. 64 below) and paper patching is substantially correct. Nor does any other manuscript in The Chester Beatty Library approach this description in any particular. Following this letter Yahuda sent several pressing telegrams, concluding with one received in London on April 4, 1928: “Amount received house cleared.” On April 6, 1928, he wrote to Beatty as follows: “I succeeded in securing the large Cufic Coran for you. . . . It was a very hard job indeed to discover that Coran and still more to persuade the owners to part with it. Even after I had concluded the purchase and paid the price for it, I had great difficulty in getting it out of their hands . . . the more you look at it, the more you will like it and realise that it is a fine specimen of a Cufic Coran, especially because it contains such a large portion of the Coran. It happens that Professor Moritz, the former Director and Organiser of the Khedivial (now Royal) Library is here, and I showed him a few leaves in order to hear his opinion on them. He was very excited when he saw them and agreed with me that the writing was undoubtedly of the first Mohammedan century and that also the decoration of the sura-headings were [*sic*] original, although the colours might have been retouched in some places. As a matter of fact I found the pattern in the same colours on Coptic wood-pieces and cloth of the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. and this confirms still further the date and genuineness of the decorations. I am sending you a copy of Professor Moritz's specimens of Arabic calligraphy [*sic*] in which you will find facsimiles of Cufic Corans of the first and second centuries A.H., which show the same type of writing as your Coran. Professor Moritz was very anxious to know how many leaves I had in my possession, because he wanted to persuade me to offer it to the Berlin Library. Of course I did not give him any further details and left him in the belief that I had only the leaves which I had shown him.” Under these circumstances it is perhaps not strange that Moritz failed to recognize this manuscript as the same one he had seen in Fū'ah approximately twenty-five years earlier. Yahuda's somewhat hyperbolic account does tend to confirm that it was in private hands there, rather than in the mosque. There is no *waqf* notice on any of the folios.

64. Arberry, *Koran*, p. 4, reported that this Qur'ān had a Mamlūk binding; see also n. 6 above. At present the manuscript is kept unbound in a wooden box. The author was informed in the winter of 1983–84 that the binding had long been missing and could no longer be identified. Subsequently, however, it was found on a storeroom shelf, still with the number 1404 pasted on it; in addition, measurements and a slight curvature along the bottom edges of both binding and folios



confirm that they belong together. The restoration notice thus clearly refers to CBL 1404.

65. CBL 1404 should therefore be added to the short list of extant manuscripts for which the claim of "Uthmānic codex" has been made. See al-Munajjid, *Dirāsāt*, pp. 50–55, where four such manuscripts are listed. Al-Munajjid has demonstrated that none of them can be in the hand of 'Uthmān. Moḥammad Jūrbajī may have been either Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Dādah (d. ca. 1148/1735) or his nephew Muḥammad b. Qāsim, both members of the prominent Sharā'ibī family of Cairo merchants, originally from the Maghrib; both were members of the 'Azab corps (*ūjāq*); see A. Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIIIe siècle*, 2 v., Damascus, 1973–74, index, s.v. Šarā'ibī, esp. v. 2, pp. 668, 728. The title *ghānim*, literally "sharer in the booty," appears to have been uncommon in eleventh-/eighteenth-century Egypt, and its import in this context is not clear. For a discussion of the extensive private library of the Sharā'ibīs and their generosity in granting access to it, see 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Jabartī, 'Ajā'ib al-athār fi'l-tarājima wa-al-akhbār, v. 1, Būlāq, 1297/1880, p. 204.

66. Frequently also small damaged strips of parchment have been pasted onto folios from quite different parts of the text, and at other points paper has been pasted over the text, so that it cannot be read.

67. H.-C. von Bothmer has argued, "Architekturbilder im Koran: Eine Prachthandschrift der Umayyadenzeit aus dem Yemen," *Pantheon*, v. 45, 1987, pp. 5, 15, that parchment leaves of the size of those in manuscript no. 20–33.1 from the Great Mosque of Šan'ā' do not occur in double-page spreads. The maximum preserved dimensions of that manuscript are 43.9 x 36.5 cm., though von Bothmer claims without explanation that originally they must have measured 51 x 47 cm. The preserved dimensions of the folios in CBL 1404 are 47 x 38 cm., according to Arberry, *Koran*, p. 4. As the preserved folios of the two manuscripts are of approximately the same width, however, the possibility that Šan'ā' 20–33.1 also consisted of double-page spreads cannot be ruled out.

68. This pattern seems to have been more common in Maghribi manuscripts, of smaller size and often of later date; see, for example, 1424 in The Chester Beatty Library, dated by Arberry, *Koran*, p. 36, no. 119, to the fifth/eleventh century. The alternative explanation, that six, eight, or ten sheets were laid so that flesh sides and hair sides faced each other and then folded in the middle, seems unlikely; the author has so far come across no example of a parchment Qur'ān in which gatherings were arranged in this way.

69. There are scaling bronze-colored additions of a later period that suggest an attempt at "gilding" of a sort.

70. *Ajzā'* 1, 3, 4, 6–11, 13, 16, 21, 22, 24, 28, 29. After this manuscript came into The Chester Beatty Library, its folios were divided into two groups, the smaller of which contained about seventy-eight folios considered to be more interesting from an artistic point of view or better preserved. Each group was numbered in pencil, starting with the numeral 1 but ignoring the correct sequence of the text. With the permission of the Librarian, the author rearranged all the folios in

a single correct sequence, without, however, writing new numbers on them. The folio numbers presented below therefore seem somewhat scrambled. An asterisk indicates one of the "better" series.

<i>Juz'</i>	<i>Ends (Cairo ed.)</i>	<i>1404 f. number</i>
1	II:141	77a
3	III:92	189b
4	IV:23	65b
6	V:81	*14
7	VI:110	*8a
8	VII:87	12b
9	VIII:41	*32a
10	IX:92	55b
11	XI:5	101a
13	XIV:52	*36a
16	XIX:135	*46b
21	XXIII:30	*53b
22	XXXVI:27	*61a
24	XLI:46	182b
28	LXVI:12	191a
29	LXXVII:50	*74b

71. "Arabic Palaeography," p. 136.

72. *Fihrist al-kutub al-'arabiyyah*, pp. 2–3, no. 18953. For illustrations, see Moritz, *Arabic Palaeography*, pls. 1–12. The text contained on the illustrated pages is as follows:

Plate 1, probably a full page, 12 lines, end of Sūrah XXXVII  
Plate 2, detail of plate 1

Plate 3, detail of end of Sūrah XXXI

Plates 4–5, details of end of Sūrah XLVI

Plate 6, full page, 11 lines, end of Sūrah XLVIII

Plate 7, detail of end of Sūrah LVI

Plate 8, detail of end of Sūrah LIX

Plate 9, detail of end of Sūrah LXIII

Plate 10, detail of end of Sūrah LXV

Plate 11, detail of end of Sūrah LXVI

Plate 12, detail of end of Sūrah LXXXVI

Déroche, *Catalogue*, pp. 52, 75–77, noted that the thirty-eight folios of ms. 324c in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, with twelve lines to a text page measuring 47–48 x 55.5 cm., and the twelve folios of ms. 462 in the Gotha State Library are from the same Qur'ān; cf. Seetzen, *Verzeichniss*, p. 26, no. 1449. For an illustration of folio 39r from B.N. 324c, see E. Tisserant, *Specimina Codicum Orientalium*, Bonn, 1914, pl. 42, and, for one from Gotha, see Moeller, *Paläographische Beiträge*, pl. XIV.

73. That is, from Ṭanbūl in the Nile delta; see Official Standard Names Approved by the United States Board on Geographic Names, *Gazetteer* 45. *Egypt and the Gaza Strip*, Washington, D.C., 1959, p. 374, s.v. Ṭanbūl al-Kubrā.

74. Déroche does not seem to have recognized that these folios belong to the later portion of the manuscript and cited some of them as parallels for ornamented pages in B.N. 324c; *Catalogue*, pp. 75–77. It appears that acquisition of portions of this Qur'ān from the mosque of 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ by Seetzen, Asselin de Cherville, and probably others as well in the first decades of the nineteenth century (cf. n. 34 above) is what necessitated the replacement of so many folios in 1246/1830. In this connection it is worth noting Seetzen's report, dated January 17, 1809, that he had seen in the mosque of 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ a large "Kūfic" Qur'ān with wide bands of colored

- ornament and a *waqf* notice in the name of ‘Umar (‘Amr). He attempted to buy several leaves from the female attendant but found her too “bigoted” to sell; [C. F. H.] Kruse, ed., *Ubrich Jasper Seetzen’s Reisen durch Syrien, Palästina, Phönicien, die Transjordan-Länder, Arabia Petraea und Unter-Aegypten*, v. 3, Berlin, 1855, p. 389. Obviously, he was eventually successful in obtaining some folios for the library in Gotha.
75. This difference was implicitly recognized by Moritz, who cited only plates 2–5, representing three pages, in connection with the supposed “Umayyad” ornamental bands in this Qur’ān; “Ausflüge in der Arabia Petraea,” *Université de Saint-Joseph, Mélanges de la Faculté Orientale*, v. 3, 1908, p. 430 and n. 2.
  76. For example, at the right of Moritz, *Arabic Palaeography*, pl. 1, contouring has been drawn around letters that intrude into the decorative band; a black line is also visible where earlier material was apparently erased and the interlace continued by a later hand.
  77. This feature is generally supposed to be characteristic of “Hijāzī” script; see nn. 6–7 above.
  78. Costa, “La moschea grande di Šan’a,” *Istituto Orientale di Napoli, Annali*, v. 34 (N.S. 24), 1974, pp. 505–6.
  79. See Puin, “Methods”; Bothmer, “Architekturbilder”; Bothmer, “Frühislamische Koran-Illuminationen: Meisterwerke aus dem Handschriftenfund der Grossen Moschee in Sanaa/Yemen,” *Kunst & Antiquitäten*, v. 1, 1986, pp. 23–33; Bothmer, “Meisterwerke islamischer Buchkunst: Koranische Kalligraphie und Illuminationen im Handschriftenfund aus der Grossen Moschee in Sanaa,” *Jemen: 3000 Jahre Kunst und Kultur des glücklichen Arabien*, ed. W. Davies, Innsbruck, 1987, pp. 177–87.
  80. Whereas almost all known surviving parchment Qur’ān fragments lack their original beginning and ending pages—those pages being the most subject to wear and thus the first to be discarded or replaced—this manuscript lacks its middle, which was very likely in better condition. In this connection it should be noted that at least one European collector, the Italian Giuseppe Caprotti, was active in Yemen at the beginning of this century. Although none of the Qur’āns so far published as having belonged to him seems related to this one, it would not be surprising if other portions of the Šan’a’ Qur’āns were eventually to be identified in collections in Europe and elsewhere. See E. Griffini, “Die jüngste ambrosianische Sammlung arabischer Handschriften,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, v. 69, 1915, pp. 63–88. It should be noted, too, that E. D. Ross reported having seen the first and last folios of a small parchment Qur’ān in Tunis in the 1920s; “Some Rare Mss. Seen in Tunis,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, v. 3, 1923–25, pp. 610–15. One of them contained a *waqf* notice (see illustration facing p. 612) dated 275/889. These folios subsequently passed into the hands of Baron Rodolph d’Erlanger of Sidi Bou Saïd.
  81. Bothmer, “Architekturbilder.”
  82. For the dating of the cache, see Costa, “Moschea,” p. 506, confirmed in personal communication.
  83. Bothmer, “Architekturbilder,” p. 14, figs. 10–11, 14–15; p. 15, figs. 17–20; p. 16, figs. 23–24, 27; Bothmer, “Frühislamische Koran-Illumination,” p. 31, fig. 11; p. 32, fig. 12.
  84. Bothmer, “Architekturbilder,” p. 5.
  85. A second Qur’ān from the mosque of ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ, now in the Dār al-Kutub in Cairo, may have some bearing on the dating of group 2; *Fihrist al-kutub*, p. 2, no. 17852, with 332 folios, including “many” replacements on white paper. Unfortunately, it has not been published, though Moritz illustrated one page, containing the end of Sūrah XXIII, in his *Arabic Palaeography*, pl. 17. It is clear even from this limited sample that paleographically the manuscript resembles those of group 2, with eighteen lines to a vertical page and verse endings marked by three parallel strokes. There is no indication of fives or tens, though in line 1 additional space has been left after XXIII:109, presumably numbered 110 in this manuscript; a compass-drawn circle in that space may be a later addition. The most striking difference from group 2 manuscripts is that, instead of an ornamental band separating the two *sūrah*s, there is only a line space. Unfortunately, because this manuscript is so poorly published, it cannot be determined whether or not it was originally left unfinished. Its date has occasioned some controversy since Moritz first published the *waqf* notice contained in it; *Arabic Palaeography*, pl. 18. According to this notice, written in a hasty cursive hand, the Qur’ān was presented to the “old mosque” (*al-jāmi‘ al-‘atīq*) in Fuṣṭāṭ Miṣr by Aḥmad ibn al-Iskāf al-Warrāq in Ramaḍān of the year ?68. The designation of the hundreds is only partly preserved; it consists of a short, slightly curved initial stroke connected to a tall letter. In Moritz’s photograph the latter seems to have been connected to a following letter by a stroke that is broken off at the damaged edge of the parchment. Moritz read the initial stroke as *mīm* and the second letter as *alif* and dated the Qur’ān to 168/784–85, without offering an explicit justification for his reading. Karabacek, “Arabic Palaeography,” pp. 133–36, insisted, again without explanation, that it should be 268/881–82; cf. Grohmann, “Problems of Dating,” p. 216, n. 17. Rice established that the later date is more plausible in view of the reference to the “old mosque,” for probably this term came into use only after the construction of a new congregational mosque, that of Ibn Ṭulūn, completed in 263–65/876–79; *Ibn al-Bawwāb*, p. 2, n. 4. The nineteenth-century catalogue read the date 368/978–79, which, though ignored or dismissed by Moritz, Karabacek, Grohmann, and Rice, also seems plausible. The first stroke looks like a toothed letter; there is no sign of a loop to justify calling it a *mīm*. Furthermore, the second letter seems to have been connected to a following one. Although there are instances in Arabic handwriting of *mīm*s drawn carelessly without loops and *alif*s connected to succeeding letters, to assume that both peculiarities occurred in this instance, without supporting evidence, is to accept the less probable of two possible explanations, especially as in the rest of the rather long *waqf* notice the *mīm*s are looped and the *alif*s usually not connected. It thus seems more reasonable provisionally to take the late fourth/tenth century as the *terminus ante quem* for this manuscript, though until the *waqf* notice has been carefully examined at first hand a third-/ninth-century date cannot be ruled out.
  86. Abbott, *Rise*, p. 40. CBL 1434, a large fragment of the first surviving Qur’ān in “broken cursive” script (see n. 59 above),



- is vocalized in red, green, yellow, and blue. An endpaper note in a much later hand indicates that the four colors distinguish the readings of Ibn Kathīr (d. ca. 120/737) according to Ibn Abī Bazzāh (siḡ, d. ca. 240/854) and of Abū 'Amr ibn al-A'la' (d. ca. 154/770) according to al-Yazīdī (d. ca. 202/817): Red and green indicate what they agreed on, the latter reserved for the "additional" diacriticals, like *maddah*, *hamzah*, *tashdīd*, and so on, whereas yellow indicates the variants of Ibn Kathīr and blue those of Abū 'Amr. Cf. Bergsträsser and Pretzl, *Geschichte*, pp. 261–73. For a brief discussion of the "canonical" readings, see W. M. Watt, ed., *Bell's Introduction to the Qur'ān*, Edinburgh, 1970, pp. 48–50.
87. There are many more instances of green dots and other additions throughout the manuscript than have been cited here. Some are ambiguous, as when it is unclear whether a dot was meant to follow one letter (*ḍammah*) or stand above the next (*fatḥah*). There are also instances in which the green additions are simply puzzling, for example, the insertion of an entirely superfluous *lām* after *alīfin wa'lyasā'a*, changing it to nonsensical *wa-a-lil-yasā'a* (Marsh 178, f. 20a, XXXVIII:40). Overall, however, the only consistent pattern that emerges is the one identified here, in which the placement of the green dots follows the same basic principles that guided placement of the red dots.
  88. That the green dots and other corrections are later than the red ones is clear from the fact that they occasionally overlap or are displaced because of the latter.
  89. See, for example, CBL 1409, 1412, 1422A.
  90. A similar instance is cited in Bergsträsser and Pretzl, *Geschichte*, p. 263, n. 2. In some manuscripts a third party has added marks, sometimes simply "restoring" those of the "red" reader, particularly the *kasrah* of the genitive ending when it has been altered to a *ḍammah* by the "green" reader. It is not possible to determine whether these oddities are related in any way to the use of the nominative in place of the genitive ending in the common speech of al-Baṣrah in the second/eighth century; see C. Pellat, *Le milieu basrien et la formation de Ḡaḥīz*, Paris, 1953, p. 127, esp. n. 3.
  91. Dodge, *Fihrist*, v. I, pp. 68–72.
  92. See n. 86 above.
  93. To attempt to define such related groups is premature, but it may be useful here to indicate the range of related manuscripts by citing, on one hand, CBL 1401/Freer 29.72, 45.16, with mannered ribbon terminals and polychrome ornaments following every tenth verse (Fig. 14), and, on the other, the "Amr Qur'ān" already discussed.
  94. There are two known fragments of this manuscript. The larger is Ar. 2047 in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, thirteen folios. De Slane, *Catalogue*, p. 365, suggested that it contains a portion of *Jamharat al-nasab* by Hishām ibn al-Kalbī (ca. 120–204 or 206/737–819 or 821) and that it was written during his lifetime, a suggestion that has been accepted by some scholars, for example, G. Vajda, *Album de paléographie arabe*, Paris, 1958, pl. I; F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, v. I, Leiden, 1967, p. 269. Brockelmann, *El<sup>I</sup>*, s.v. al-Kalbī, was more doubtful; cf. G. Levi Della Vida, Review of N. A. Faris, *The Antiquities of South Arabia, Orientalia*, N.S. 9, 1940, p. 164, n. 2; J. 'Alī, "Jamharat al-nasab li-Ibn al-Kalbī," *Majallat al-Majma' al-Ilmī al-ʿIrāqī*, v. I, 1950, pp. 337–39. The second fragment, two folios, is in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin; see J. Rödiger, "Über zwei Pergamentblätter mit altarabischer Schrift," *Philologische und historische Abhandlungen der Königl. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, 1876, pp. 135–43. These folios came to the library bound with a Qur'ān that had belonged to the eighteenth-century traveler Carsten Niebuhr. More recently, W. Caskel, *Ḥamharat an-nasab: Das genealogische Werk des Hishām ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbī*, v. I, Leiden, 1966, p. 110, noted without a reference that Levi Della Vida had "long ago" established that the text of the Paris fragment is not by Ibn al-Kalbī; it has not been possible to locate a published statement by Levi Della Vida to this effect. On the other hand, Abbott, "Arabic Paleography," p. 82, identified the author as Abū 'Abdallāh al-Zubayr ibn Bakkār (d. 256/870), also without a reference. Certain features of the script, for example, the connecting of medial *fā'* and *qāf* to the base line only by means of "stems," do suggest that the manuscript belongs to a rather late phase of development; Caskel, pp. 110–11, considered it typical of the third/ninth or fourth/tenth century. 'Alī also commented on the absence of any justification for an early third-/ninth-century date. A close paleographic parallel is a Qur'ān fragment, Ar. 334e, in the Bibliothèque Nationale, one folio, Déroche, *Catalogue*, pl. XIV.
  95. Rice, *Ibn al-Bawwāb*, p. 3; cf. Lings, *Quranic Art*, pp. 16–17; Lings and Y. H. Safadi, *The Qur'ān*, London, 1976, pp. 12–13.
  96. Arberry, *Koran*, p. 10, included in the category "Persian Kūfic" CBL 1417, four bound fragments of a parchment Qur'ān dated 292/905 (a total of 187 folios containing II:253–III:91, IV:44–148, VII:88–VIII:38, IX: 80–87, 93, XI: 27–29, 84–88, XXV:1–5, 22–XXVII:55, not in proper sequence), but, though the script includes a few characteristic features like the point at the base of the *alif*, it is actually a rather unattractive cursive that differs from "broken Kūfic" in significant ways. Other folios from this Qur'ān are in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (26.161.3, two folios, containing V:117–VI:3, the gift of the dealer Kirkor Minassian in 1926) and the Library of Congress (LCI-85-154.82a-aa, two folios containing LXXXVI:25–LXXXVII:3 and LXIX:46–LXXI:5 respectively, and AL 20, two folios containing VI: 69–71 and 77–80, also from Minassian). In the latter collection there are also several folios from a parchment Qur'ān written by the same hand but in a horizontal format (CSM 83, fifty-six folios; from Minassian). These two manuscripts require special study, but they cannot be considered early examples of "broken Kūfic." See n. 59 above.
  97. There is a large fragment in The Chester Beatty Library, I434 (170 folios, ten lines per page, containing I–VI:165). The colophon with the date is in another fragment in the library of Istanbul University, A6758 (sixteen folios containing XIX–XXXVII); F. E. Karatay, *Istanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi Arapça Yazmalar Kataloğu*, v. I, no. 1, Istanbul, 1951, p. 3 and pl. V; cf. Rice, *Ibn al-Bawwāb*, p. 3 and n. 1. In his unpublished notes Rice also identified a fragment from the Ardabil shrine, which was exhibited in London in 1931, as part of this Qur'ān (see *Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Persian Art . . . 7th January to 7th March 1931, Royal Academy of Arts, London*, 3rd ed., London,

- 1931, p. 81, no. 126D); James, *Qurʾans*, p. 27, repeated the identification, but unfortunately no illustration of the exhibited work seems to have been published, and it is unclear how Rice arrived at his attribution. The signature on the Istanbul fragment, which is somewhat damaged, was read by Karatay as ‘Alī ibn Shādhān al-Wāzī. In another manuscript by the same scribe the signature is quite clearly pointed, however. See F. Krenkow, *Biographies des grammairiens de l’école de Basra*, Paris and Beirut, 1936, unnumbered plate (ms. p. 191); cf. Rice, *Ibn al-Bawwāb*, p. 3, n. 1; F. Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, Marburg, 1894, repr. Hildesheim, 1963, p. 270. The reading Sādān published by James is therefore incorrect. Krenkow identified ‘Alī b. Shādhān with a transmitter of *aḥādīth* by the same name about whom Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mizān*, v. 4, Hyderabad, 1330/1911, p. 234, no. 629, gave the following information: “[He reported] according to Abū Badr al-Sakūnī and his generation. Al-Dāraqutnī considered him weak in relation to the truth. Abū Bakr al-Shāfi‘ī did not mention him. Ibn Šā‘id and Ibn Makhḥad also reported according to him.” Al-Dāraqutnī died in 385/995 and Abū Bakr in 354/965, both in Baghdad (Sezgin, pp. 206, 191); they were thus approximately contemporary with the scribe ‘Alī b. Shādhān. Abū Muḥammad Yahyā b. Šā‘id, a teacher of al-Dāraqutnī, was, however, born in Baghdad in 228/843 and died in the same city in 318/930 (Sezgin, p. 176); Ibn Makhḥad is probably to be identified with the ‘Abbāsīd secretary and vizier, al-Ḥasan b. Makhḥad b. al-Jarrāh, who was also born in Baghdad, in 209/824, and died in Antioch in 296/882 (*EL*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. Ibn Makhḥad). Neither could therefore have heard traditions from a man who was still active in 376/986. It has not been possible to identify Abū Badr al-Sakūnī.
98. Krenkow, *Biographies*, esp. pp. iii–ix.
99. CBL 4000. Cf. Rice, *Ibn al-Bawwāb*, p. 3, n. 4; Arberry, “More Niffarī,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, v. 15, 1953, pp. 30–42. In the Bibliothèque Nationale there is a copy of *Ta’rīkh mulūk al-‘arab* (Ar. 6726), attributed to Abū Sa‘īd al-Aṣma‘ī (d. 213/828; Vajda, *Album*, pl. 3); according to its colophon, it was copied by Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb ibn al-Sikkīt on 10 Shawwāl 243/January 30, 858. The manuscript consists of twenty-seven folios on parchment and came to the library as part of the collection of the philologist Henri Pognon in 1922; see E. Blochet, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes des nouvelles acquisitions 1884–1924*, Paris, 1925, pp. iv, 347, where it is said to be written on “gazelle skin.” Blochet expressed some discomfort about this manuscript, which was occasioned by the “astonishing” condition in which it was preserved, the absence of the customary readers’ notes, the presence of identical verse extracts in another work from the same collection (Ar. 6738; 952/1545–46), and the apparently anachronistic use of the term “terres émiriennes” (the Arabic term is not given) in the colophon. Some years later Franz Rosenthal, “From Arabic Books and Manuscripts 1. Pseudo-Aṣma‘ī on the Pre-Islamic Arab Kings,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, v. 69, 1949, pp. 90–91, added several further items to this list; in particular, he noted that an edition of the first part of the text of Ar. 6738 had appeared in Baghdad in 1332/1913–14 with an attribution to Yahyā ibn al-Washshā‘. He also called attention to some additional anachronisms: the repeated introductory phrase “wa balaghanī yā Amīr al-Mu‘minīn” and the flowing rhymed prose of the introductory sentences. He thus concluded that the work is not by al-Aṣma‘ī but is a compilation of an indeterminate later period, perhaps the fourth/tenth century. The manuscript certainly cannot then have been copied by Ibn al-Sikkīt, and the script cannot be taken as an example of writing in the third/ninth century. Three years later ‘Alī, “Mawārid ta’rīkh al-Ṭabarī,” *Majallat al-Majma‘ al-‘ilmī al-‘Irāqī*, v. 2, 1952, pp. 142–48, definitively demonstrated that another text supposedly by al-Aṣma‘ī is a later forgery.
100. See discussion and n. 59 above.
101. That he was born in 258/871 and died in Baghdad in 346/957 seems to be universally acknowledged; *EL*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. Ibn Durustawayh; Cheikho, ed., *Kūṭāb al-kutūb*, Beirut, 1921, p. 2; Kh. Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, v. 4, Beirut, 1979, p. 76; Dodge, *Fihrist*, v. 2, p. 983. It is curious therefore that in the text itself the author has written, “I began this work in the caliphate of al-Mu‘taṣim billāh” (r. 218–27/833–42). Although Cheikho, p. 4, has supplied the correct dates for this caliph in an accompanying footnote, he has offered no comment on the apparent disparity.
102. Cheikho, *Kūṭāb*, pp. 4–5, 65; cf. S. M. Stern, “A Manuscript from the Library of the Ghaznawid Amīr ‘Abd al-Rashīd,” in R. Pinder-Wilson, ed., *Paintings from Islamic Lands*, Oxford, 1969, p. 17, n. 42.
103. One meaning of the verb ‘arraqa was “to draw the curved portion of a letter from right to left below the line”; R. Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*, 2nd ed., v. 2, Leiden and Paris, 1927, p. 121.
104. D. Sourdél, “Le ‘Livre des secrétaires’ de ‘Abdallāh al-Baghdādī,” *Bulletin d’Etudes Orientales*, v. 14, 1952–54, pp. 146–47; cf. pp. 120–22.
105. Sourdél, “Livre,” p. 151.
106. Sourdél, “Livre,” p. 124.
107. Abū ‘Uthmān ‘Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāhīz, *Thalāthu rasā’il*, 2nd ed., ed. J. Finkel, 1382/1962, p. 43; cf. Sourdél, “Livre,” p. 126. Charles Pellat has pointed out that much of this *risālah* does not seem to have been written by al-Jāhīz, but he agrees with Sourdél that the passages attributed to him by al-Baghdādī—including the one quoted here—are authentic; Pellat, “Une charge contre les secrétaires d’état attribuée à Ġāhīz,” *Hespéris*, v. 43, 1956, pp. 30, 36.
108. Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, v. 3, p. 147; cf. p. 146.
109. Rosenthal, “Abū Ḥaiyān al-Tawḥīdī on Penmanship,” *Ars Islamica*, v. 13–14, 1948, pp. 1, 7 (Ar. 22), no. 7; cf. pp. 8–9 (Ar. 22), no. 12; p. 13 (Ar. 24), no. 42; p. 17 (Ar. 26), nos. 71–72; cf. Grohmann, *Arabische Paläographie*, v. 1, p. 127.
110. The fact that, in *Rise of the North Arabian Script*, Abbott did rely on the secretarial manuals for her identification of Qurʾānic scripts may help to explain why it has been so difficult to make use of her conclusions in the study of extant manuscripts.
111. Bergsträsser and Pretzl, *Geschichte*, p. 251.
112. Abbott, “Arabic Numerals,” *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic*



- Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1938, p. 280. Abbott dismissed the earlier conclusion of A. Mingana, "Arabic Numerals," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1937, pp. 315–16, that the inverted order of the numbers was the work of a Persian or Syrian copyist who was not thoroughly familiar with Arabic. All the parchment Qurʾāns with verse enumerations examined by the author are characterized by numbers written in inverted order, not only in the *sūrah* headings but also in the cumulative totals given in the rosettes marking the tens; it seems hardly likely that none of the earliest Qurʾāns was copied by a native Arabic speaker.
113. C. F. Beckingham, "Arabic Numerals," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1940, p. 64.
114. Dates were written in the "new fashion" as early as 22/641 in papyrus documents (J. Karabacek *et al.*, *Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer: Führer durch die Ausstellung*, Vienna, 1894, p. 139, no. 558; Grohmann, "Arabische Papyruskunde," *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, Abt. 1, Ergänzungsband 2/1, Leiden, 1966, pl. II/2, Berol. 15002), 31/652 in inscriptions (H. M. El-Hawary, "The Most Ancient Islamic Monument Known, Dated A.H. 31 (A.D. 652), from the Time of the Third Caliph ʿUthman," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1930, pp. 321–33), and 72/691 on coins (M. L. Bates, "History, Geography and Numismatics in the First Century of Islamic Coinage," *Revue Suisse de Numismatique*, v. 65, 1986, pp. 283–94). That this way of writing numbers was not confined to dates is clear from the first cited papyrus, which refers to a quantity of sheep (*khamṣa ʿashara*). Even in the Qurʾān text itself numbers are expressed in this way; see XXXVIII:23 (*tiṣʿun wa-tiṣʿūnah*).
115. This conclusion receives some oblique confirmation from the early Islamic poet Abū Duʿād al-Ruʾāsī al-Kilābī, who lived in the Hijāz and who, in one of his couplets, referred to the *ʿunwān* ("title") of a book in a context clearly implying decoration of some kind; although the Qurʾān is not in question, the reference is evidence that headings similar to those in the "Kūfic" *maṣāḥif* were known already at the beginning of the Islamic period. See Krenkow, "The Use of Writing for the Preservation of Ancient Arabic Poetry," *A Volume of Oriental Studies Presented to Edward G. Browne*, ed. T. W. Arnold and R. A. Nicholson, Cambridge, Eng., 1922, p. 264.
116. Abū Bakr ibn Ayyāsh, the author of the earliest known work on the "thirtieths," was a Qurʾān "reader" at al-Kūfah; see n. 36 above. The introduction of vocalization marks was also credited in the early Arabic sources to a series of figures who were active in Iraq; Abbott, *Rise*, p. 39, with references; cf. Bergsträsser and Pretzl, *Geschichte*, pp. 261–73. In contrast to the *ajzāʾ*, however, vocalizations are found in a great variety of early Qurʾān manuscripts, including those of both groups 1 and 2.
117. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, pp. 36–37.
118. Dodge, *Fihrist*, pp. 81, 86. Dodge's identification of the "numbers" as those of the verses revealed to the Prophet in al-Madīnah (p. 81, n. 125) is surely incorrect. The *number* of verses was not the central issue in attributing passages to Mecca or al-Madīnah, nor is Mecca mentioned in this passage at all. That the numbers (*ʿadad*) referred to are those of the verses in the *sūrahs* is confirmed by the inclusion in the list of a book on the *ʿasharah* marks by Nāfiʿ, who resided at al-Madīnah and originated one of the seven "canonical" readings.
119. Abbott, "Arabic Paleography," p. 78.



FIG. 1. Qur'ān page, group 1 script, Freer 37.6, f. *ab*; II:200–1.  
Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

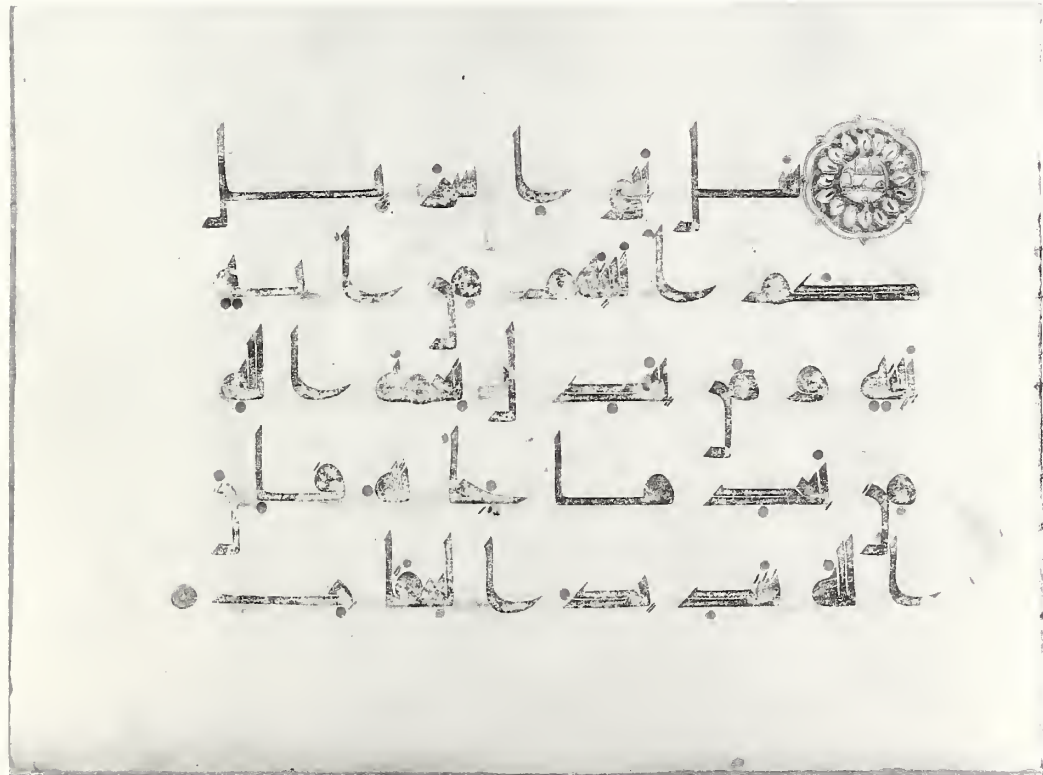


FIG. 2. Qur'ān page, group 1 script, Freer 37.6, f. *ma*; II:211 preceded by ornament following II:210.  
Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.



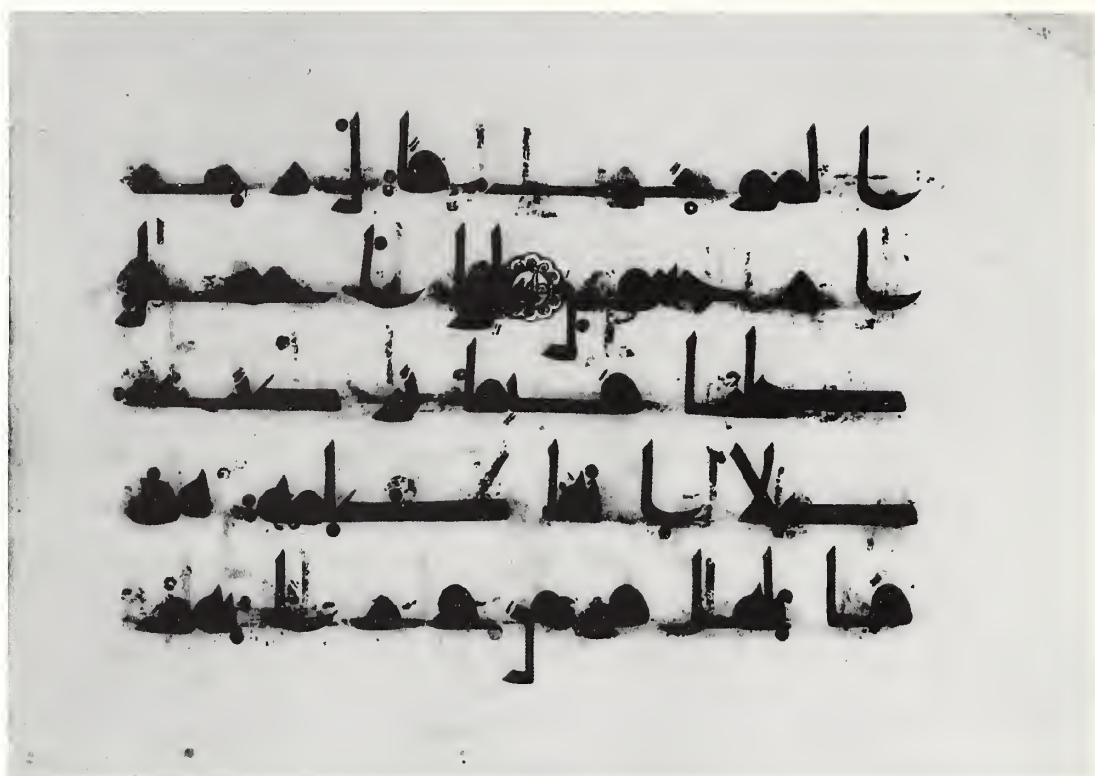


FIG. 3. Qur'ān page, group 1 script, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen, XL (5), f. 13b, XXIII:99–100.  
Reproduced by permission.

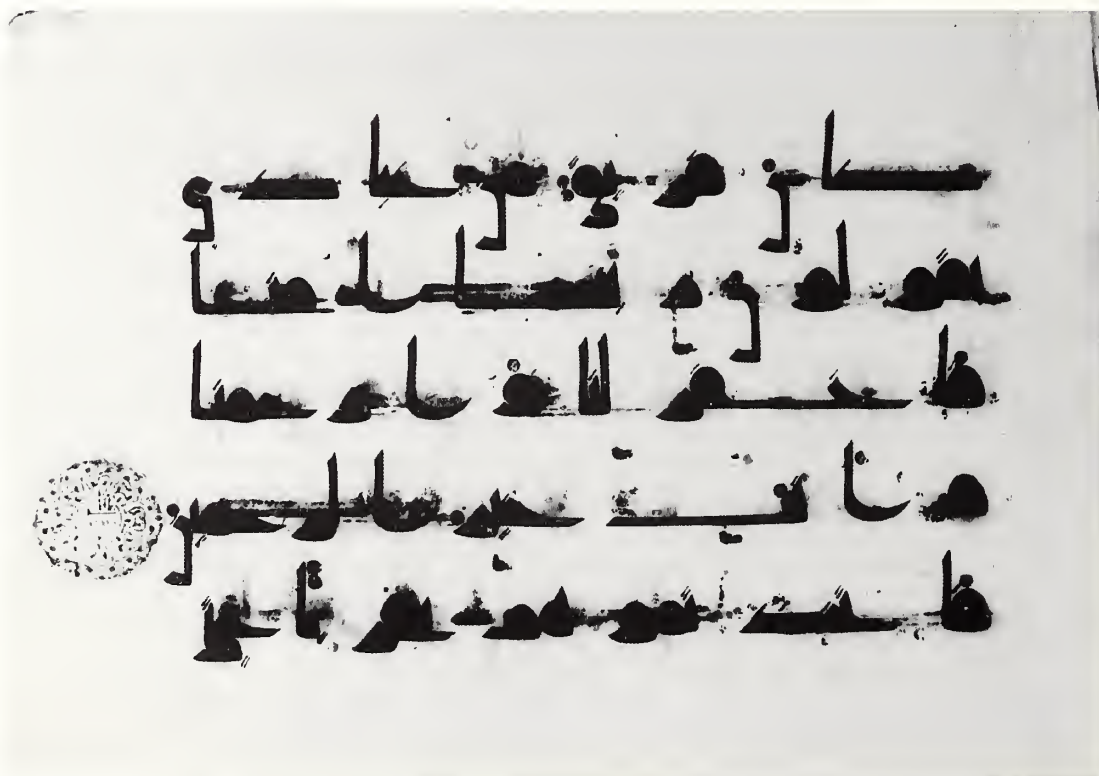


FIG. 4. Qur'ān page, group 1 script, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen, XL (5), f. 16a; XXIII:109–110.  
Reproduced by permission.

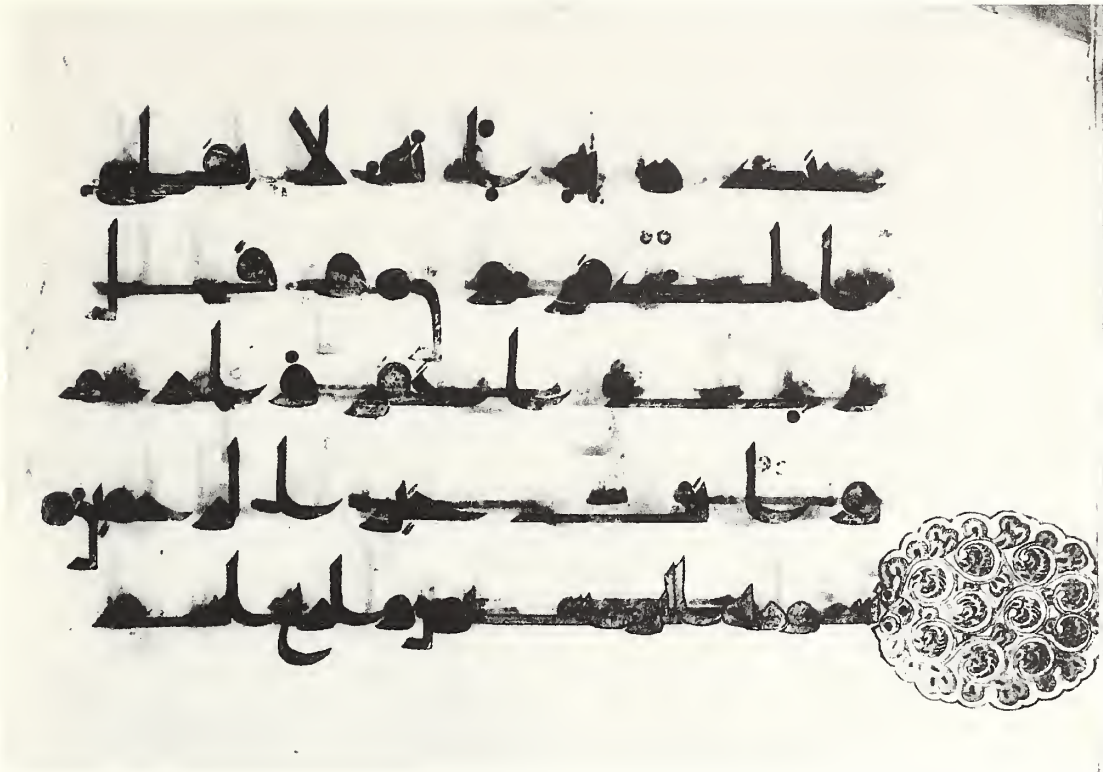


FIG. 5. Qur'ān page, group 1 script, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen, XL (5), f. 18b; XXIII:117—heading of XXIV. Reproduced by permission.

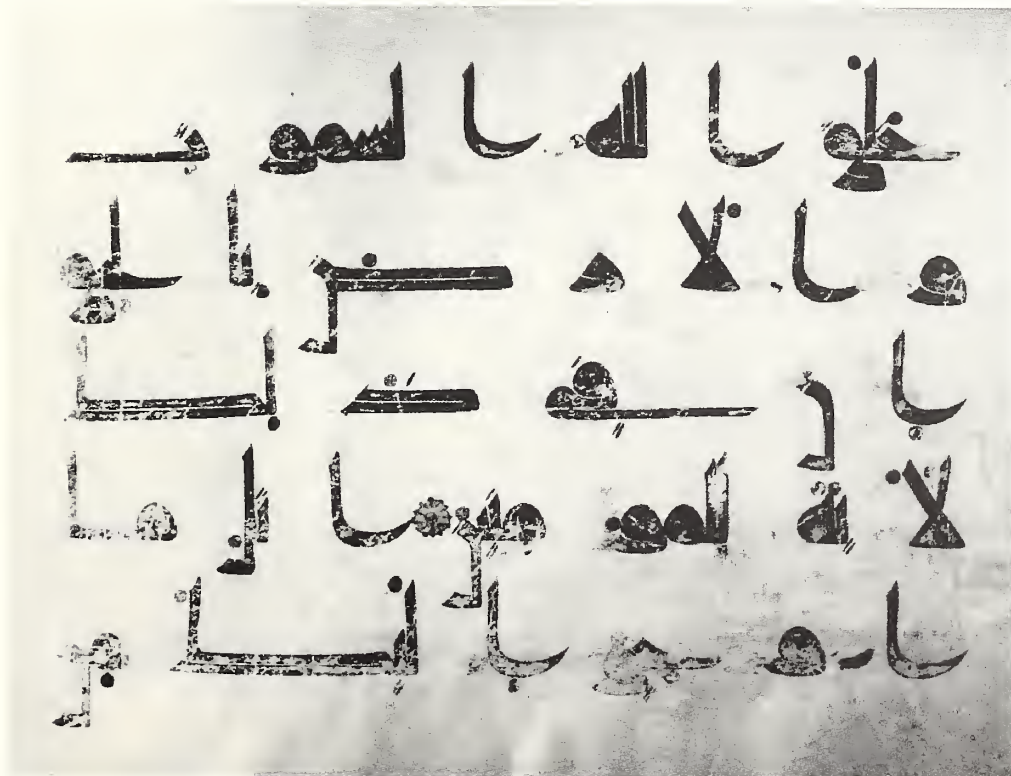


FIG. 6. Qur'ān page, group 1 script, The Chester Beatty Library, 1407, f. 1b; XXIX:44–45.



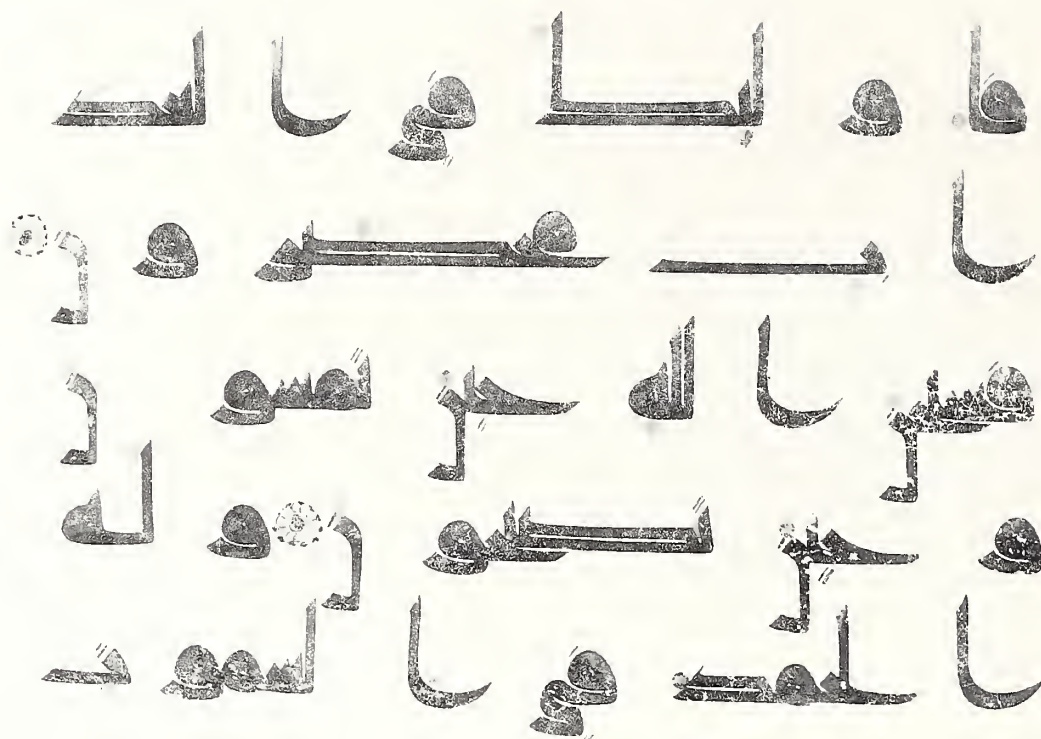


FIG. 7. Qur'ān page, group 1 script, Berlin I.2211, f. 14a; XXX:16–18. Reproduced with permission of Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.

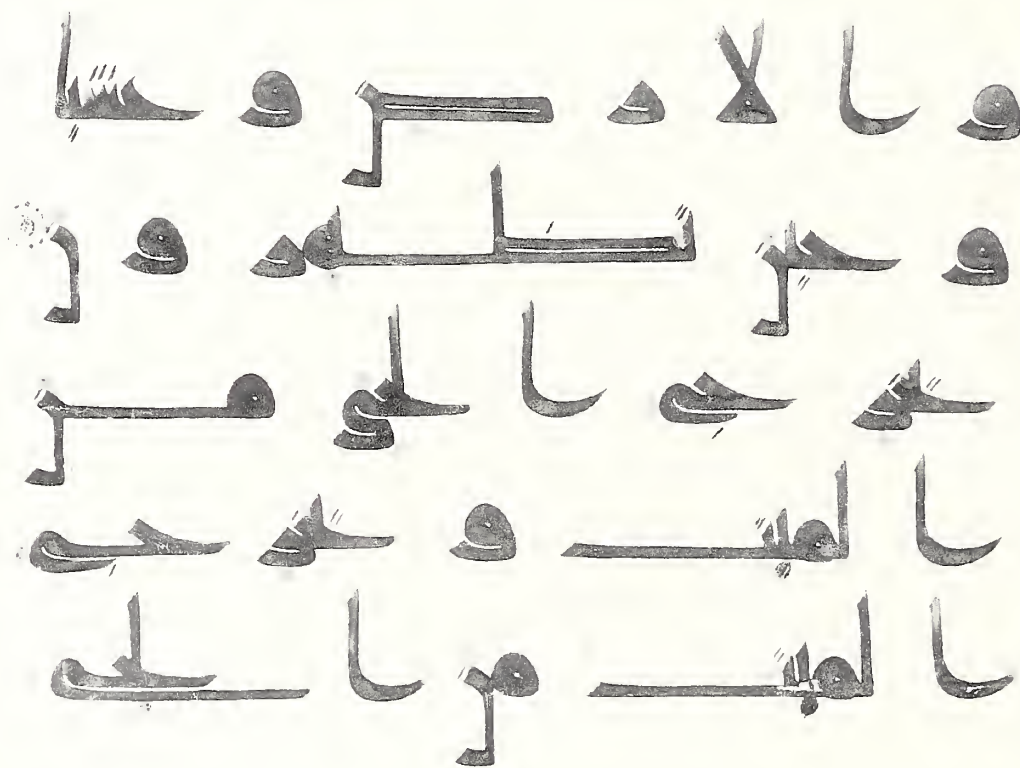


FIG. 8. Qur'ān page, group 1 script, Berlin I.2211, f. 14b; XXX:18–19. Reproduced with permission of Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.



FIG. 9. Qur'ān page, group 1 script, The Chester Beatty Library, 1407, f. 2a; XXXI:34.

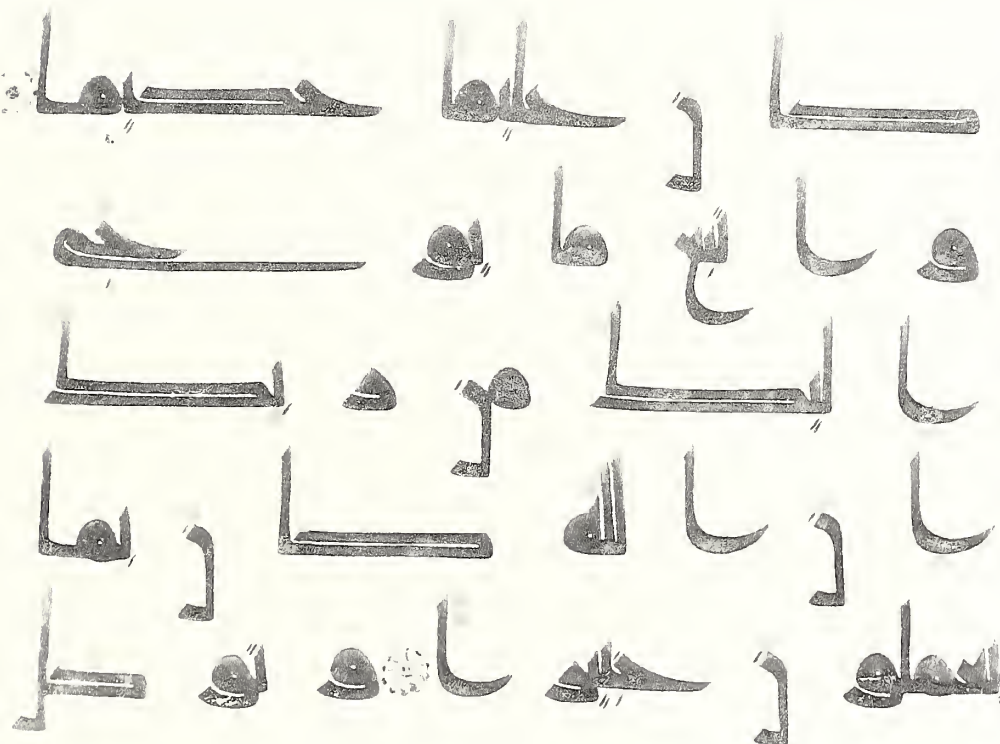


FIG. 10. Qur'ān page, group 1 script, Berlin I.2211, f. 18b; XXXIII:1–3. Reproduced with permission of Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.



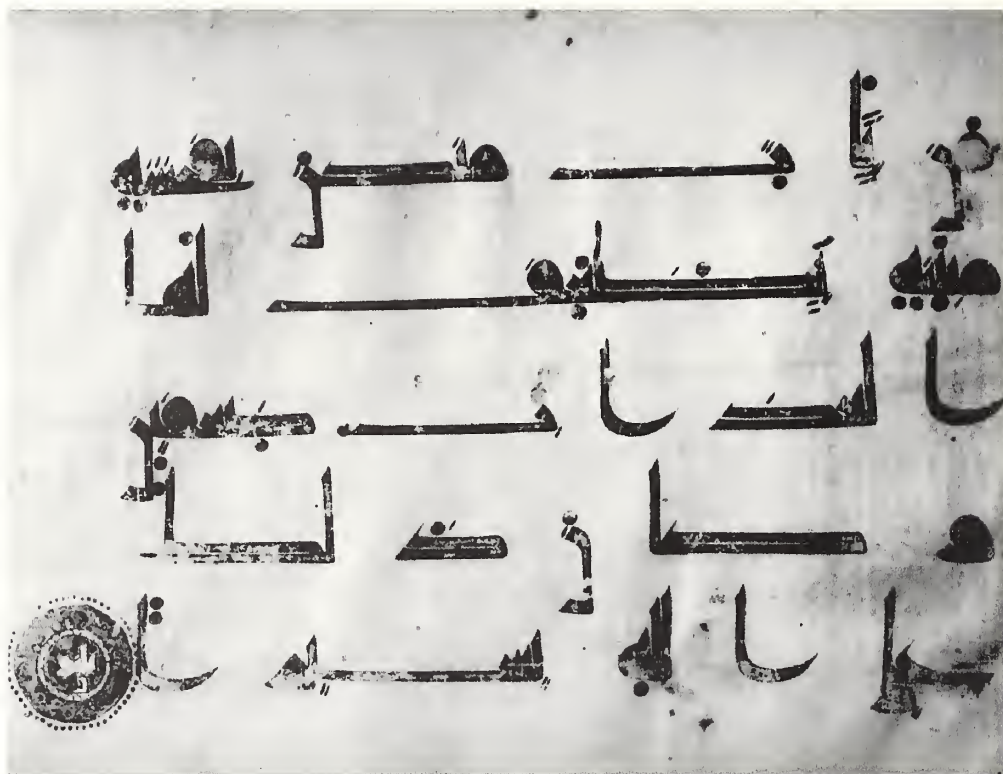


FIG. 11. Qur'an page, group 1 script, The Chester Beatty Library, 1407, f. 3a; XXXIII:30.

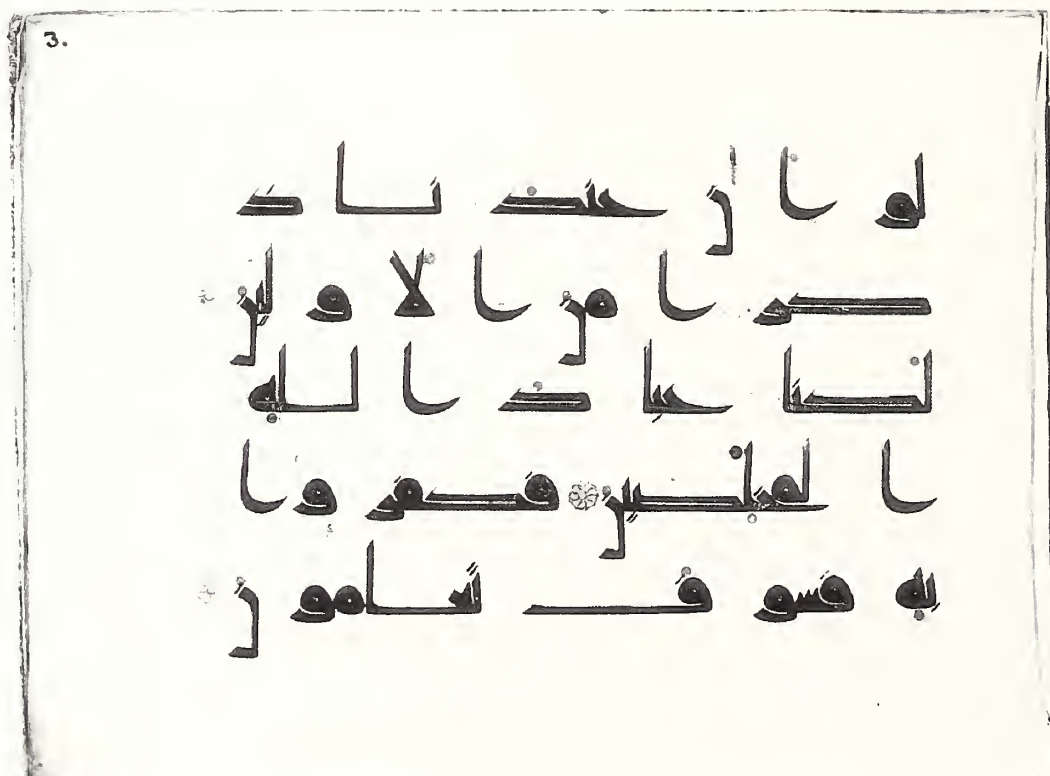


FIG. 12. Qur'an page, group 1 script, Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 12.11 Aug. 2°, f. 3a; XXXVII:168–70. Reproduced by permission.

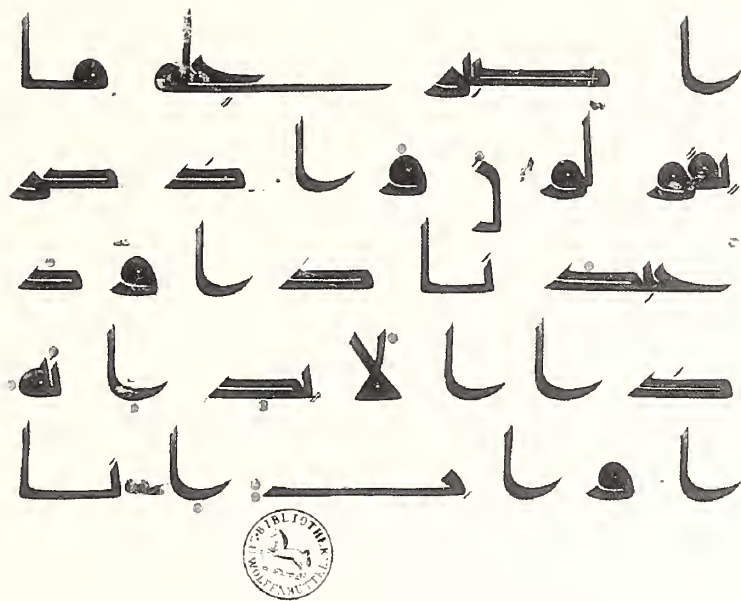


FIG. 13. Qur'an page, group 1 script, Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 12.11 Aug. 2°, f. 6b; XXXVIII:17-18. Reproduced by permission.

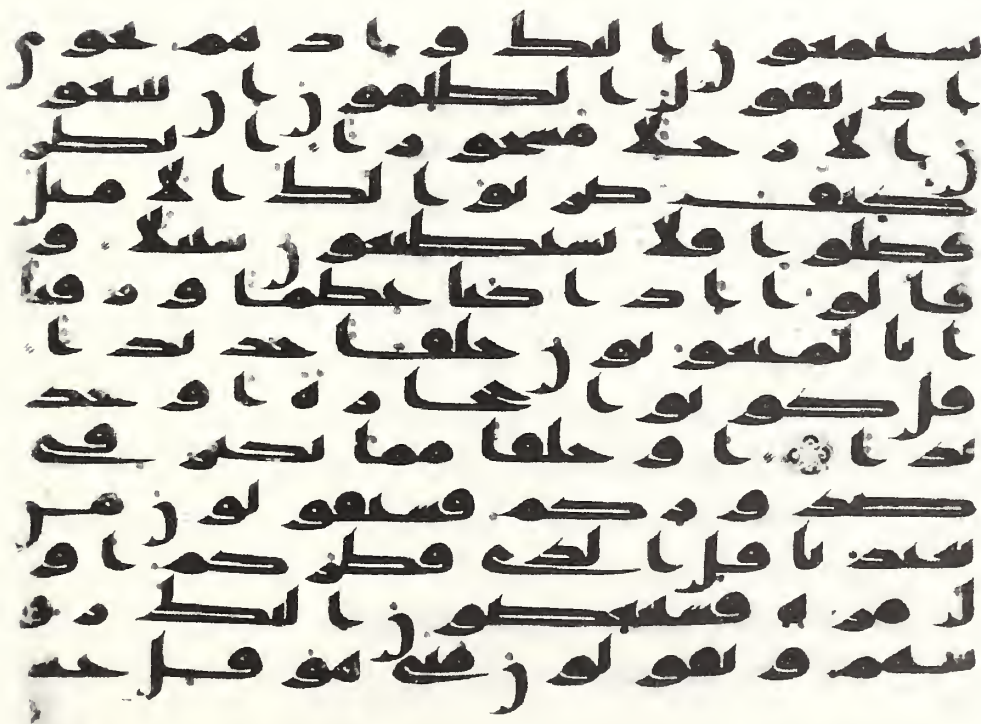


FIG. 14. Qur'an page, group 1 script, The Chester Beatty Library, 1401, f. 1b; XIII:37-41.





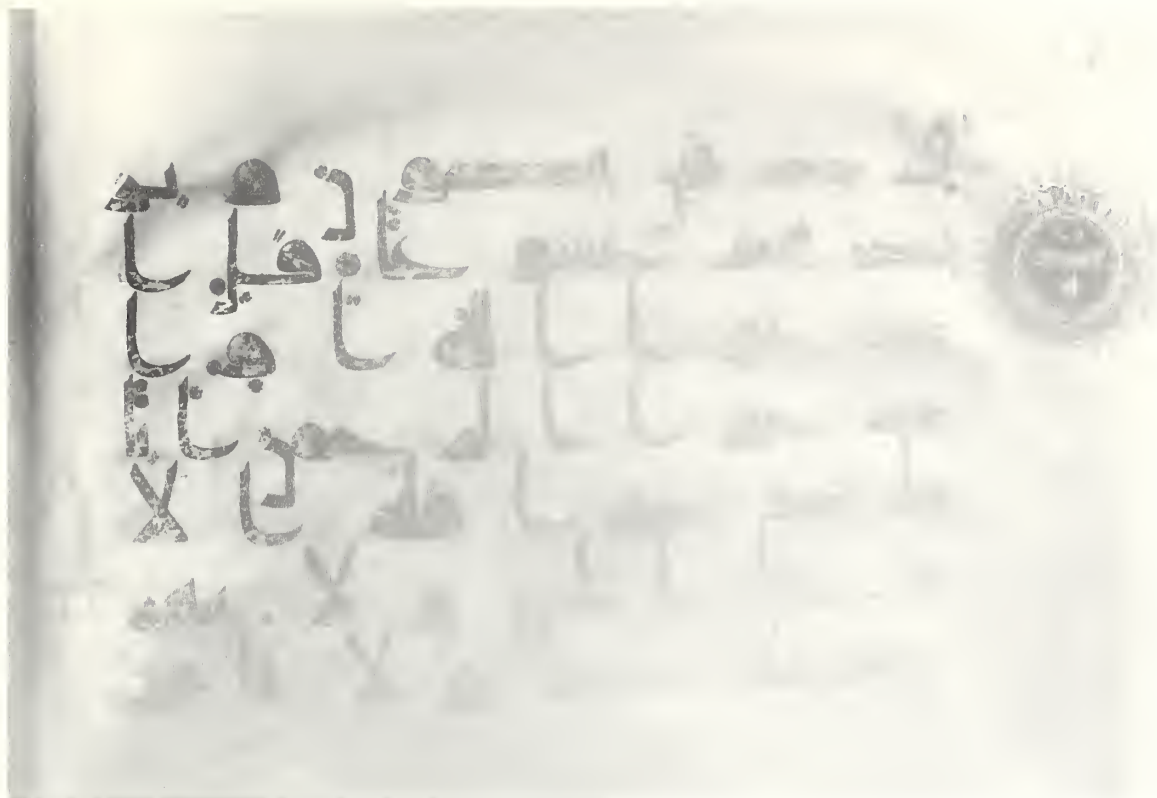


FIG. 17. Qur'ān page, group 1 script, The Chester Beatty Library, 1422B, f. 2b; XVII:109–10.



FIG. 18. Qur'ān page, group 1 script, The Chester Beatty Library, 1422B, f. 3a; XVII:110–11.



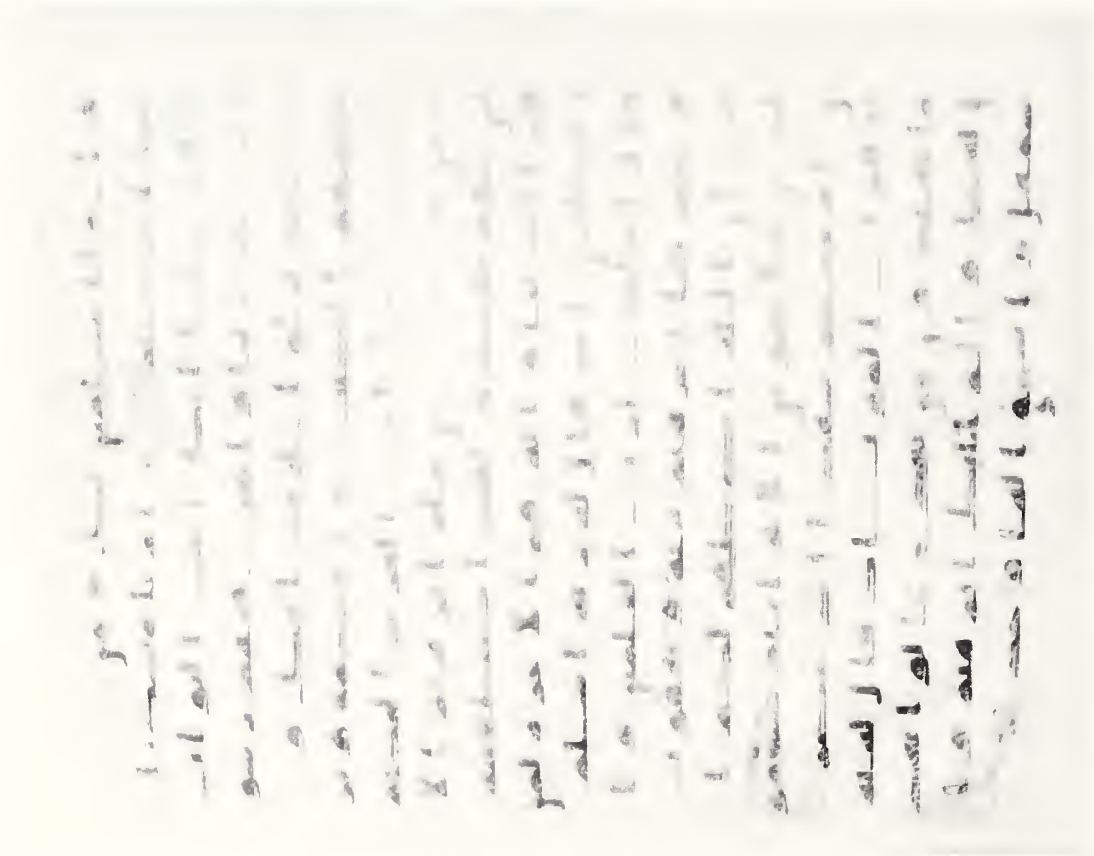


FIG. 19. Qur'an page, group 2 script,  
The Chester Beatty Library, 1404, f. \*25a; II:128-33.

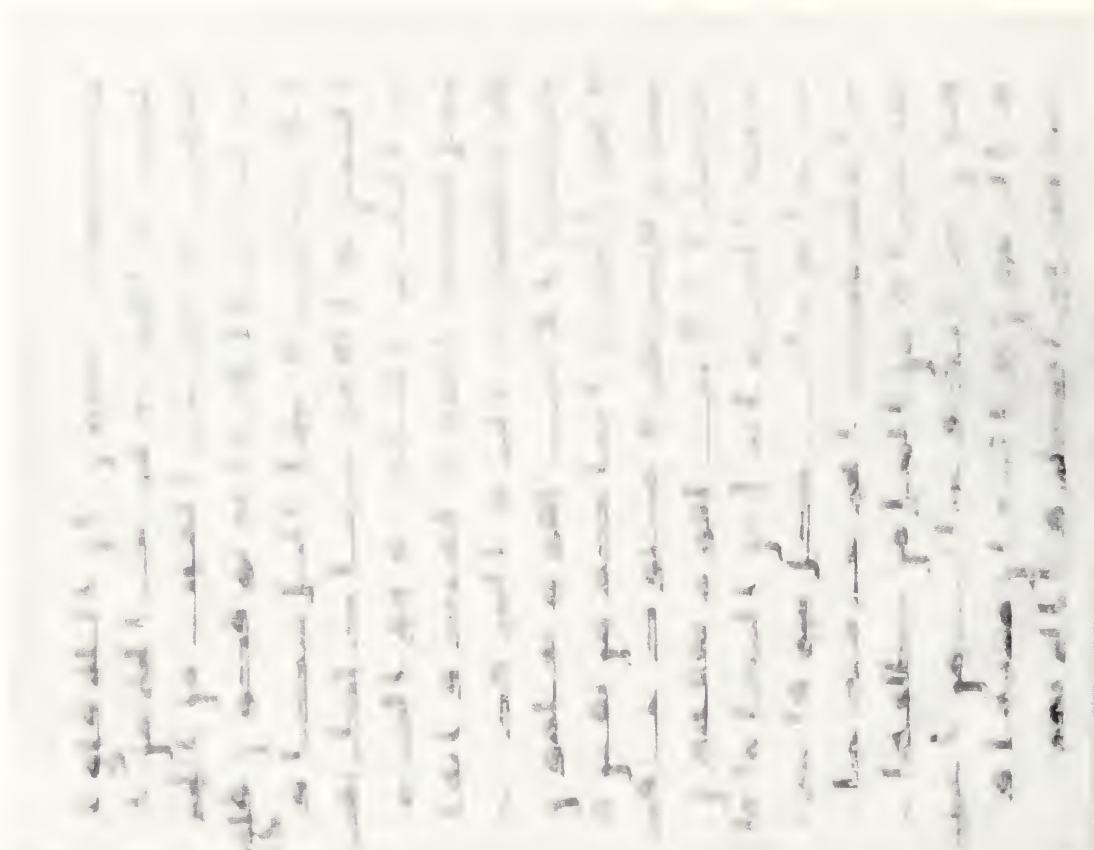


FIG. 20. Qur'an page, group 2 script,  
The Chester Beatty Library, 1404, f. \*6a; VI:94-99.

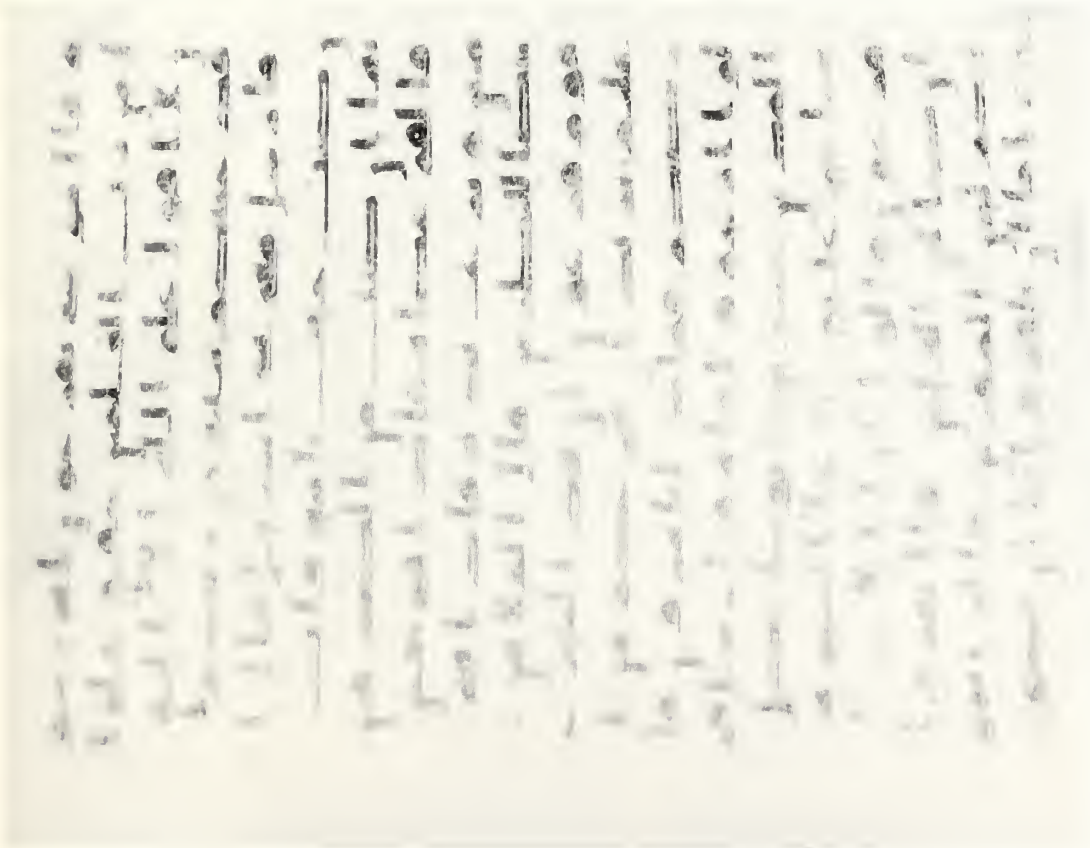


FIG. 21. Qur'ān page, group 2 script,  
The Chester Beatty Library, 1404, f. \*20b; VII:104-15.

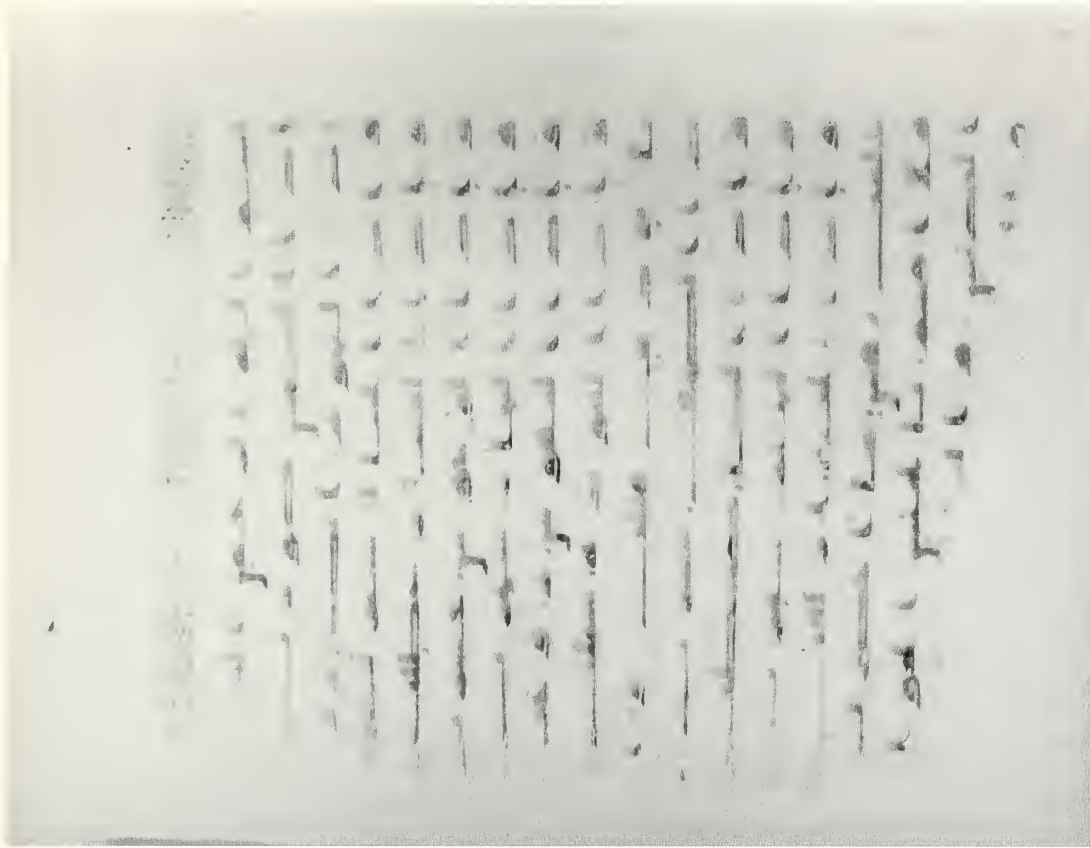


FIG. 22. Qur'ān page, group 2 script, The Chester Beatty Library, 1404, f. \*78a;  
LXXXI:ornamental ending-LXXXII:19 (partly missing).





# MAMLŪK AND ʿILKHĀNID BESTIARIES: CONVENTION AND EXPERIMENT

By ROBERT HILLENBRAND

VERY FEW MINIATURES FROM MAMLŪK MANUSCRIPTS HAVE BEEN analyzed in detail, which makes it difficult to generalize about that school as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Yet it should at least be possible to situate a given cycle of Mamlūk miniatures fairly precisely within three distinct contexts: first, other roughly contemporary Mamlūk painting; second, its own probable models; and finally, thematically comparable cycles of the period produced elsewhere in the Islamic world.

Perhaps this method will throw into sharper focus a hitherto neglected cycle of Mamlūk animal paintings: the illustrations of the copy of the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* of al-Jāḥiẓ, now in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan (Ms. 140 Inf. S. P. 67), first published by Löfgren and Lamm in 1946.<sup>2</sup> The fragmentary nature of the manuscript has not been sufficiently considered in assessing the thirty-two paintings it contains. Its eighty-seven large quarto folios comprise less than one-tenth of the text, and a *pro rata* calculation would therefore suggest that it once had, or was intended to have, more than three hundred illustrations.<sup>3</sup> It is worth emphasizing that no Mamlūk manuscript of this quality and number of illustrations is known.

The *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* is undated but is customarily placed at about 1350.<sup>4</sup> Its provenience is similarly unrecorded, as are the names of its scribe and patron. However, the number of illustrations, their unusually large size, and the generous use of gold all point to a wealthy patron. Löfgren even suggests that he might have been a *sulṭān*.<sup>5</sup> But so far no evidence indicates that a single one of the thirty Mamlūk manuscripts currently known was produced for the ruler himself,<sup>6</sup> although several Mamlūk *sulṭāns* ordered lavishly illuminated copies of the *Qurʾān*.<sup>7</sup> The implications of this contrast are indeed far-reaching. They cannot be pursued here, but it does seem clear that, in the case of secular book painting, patronage was exercised at a markedly lower social level than it was in Iran during the same period. Indeed, only one of the thirty extant Mamlūk manuscripts was indisputably produced for an *amīr*—and his rank was not of the highest.<sup>8</sup> In the absence of specific textual evidence to the contrary, one must conclude that the Ambrosian Jāḥiẓ manuscript was probably not made for a member of the ruling elite.

Following the approach outlined above, this paper will attempt—after a brief consideration of the text and its effect on the pictorial cycle—first to assess the place of these paintings within the Mamlūk school of

the fourteenth century. It will then demonstrate their marked, indeed crippling, dependence on thirteenth-century Mesopotamian models. Finally, it will analyze the slightly earlier but much more innovative animal paintings in the Pierpont Morgan Bestiary of 1290 in order to show how in the ʿIlkhānid pictorial tradition this apparently moribund genre could be renewed and by about 1370 produce such subtle and complex masterpieces as the Istanbul *Kaḥila wa Dimna*. In order to stress the truly international character of such images, at least as far as their literary origins are concerned, material from Western medieval bestiaries will be cited where relevant. Although these Western bestiaries depend ultimately on the *Physiologus*,<sup>9</sup> whereas the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* derives at multiple removes from Aristotle,<sup>10</sup> the origin of both texts in ancient Greek literature is itself a significant bond between them, and the additional material that both texts subsequently acquired is sometimes very similar. The link between the standard Western bestiary text and that of Ibn Bukhtīshūʿ (as reproduced for example in the Pierpont Morgan manuscript) is closer still.<sup>11</sup>

## *Relation of the Illustrations to the Text*

How much light can the text of the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* shed on the pictures that accompany it? The answer seems to be surprisingly little. Like much other work by al-Jāḥiẓ, it is an idiosyncratic mixture of anecdote, verses, gossip, reasoned discussion, moral saws, and humorous comment.<sup>12</sup> This is not to say that the book's title is entirely misleading: there are several chapters, for instance, devoted entirely to the dog.<sup>13</sup> But the discussion focuses only intermittently on animals. Instead, there is much material on human foibles, theological controversies, philosophy, history, and what may loosely be described as science. The passages on animals are enough to fill a respectably long book, but they have to be winkled out from a mass of entirely unrelated or only vestigially related material. Thus, the inordinate length of the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*—seven books in all—is deceptive from the zoological point of view.

It could be argued that this prolix and chaotic arrangement of the subject matter presents problems only to the reader. It need not shackle the painter. Even in lavishly illustrated medieval Islamic texts, after all, the pictures do not succeed one another at precisely



predictable intervals.<sup>14</sup> As long as the text contains enough material appropriate for illustrations, runs the argument, the painter can be well satisfied; the arrangement of that material is a secondary concern. Such an argument is especially appropriate for manuscripts that contain no more than a few highly finished pictures.<sup>15</sup> There the artist can afford to wait for the right subject.

As it happens, the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* is not such a manuscript, for it is liberally furnished with illustrations. Manuscripts in this category were subject to certain conventions. One such convention dictated that, as in any modern coffee-table book, the illustrations should be spaced fairly evenly throughout the book. Another laid a premium on images that were immediately legible. A third governed their size, ensuring that the picture space rarely exceeded half a page and thereby interlocking text and illustration. It would not be difficult to find exceptions to these rules, but their general validity can be safely asserted. Thus, it would not have been sensible for the painter of the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* to aim at producing lavishly finished full-page pictures. Indeed, his manuscript subjected him to constraints that were utterly at variance with that aim. He was committed to turning out a steady flow of somewhat simplified illustrations, probably several hundred in all, and this accentuated his dependence on the text. Unfortunately, it was not only the layout of the contents but the contents themselves that caused him difficulties.<sup>16</sup> Such a statement may sound paradoxical and therefore demands closer examination.

The *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* contains numerous lengthy digressions on subjects that do not lend themselves to illustration, such as the nature of good and evil, translation and bilingualism, prolixity and conciseness, happiness, and the reasons for Zoroaster's success.<sup>17</sup> Such digressions may be interrupted by a few sentences mentioning an animal. Then the painter pounces.<sup>18</sup> Curiously enough, this decision to illustrate asides has sometimes meant ignoring a more detailed account of an animal that on the face of it would be more suitable for illustration. Such a procedure invites the suspicion that the artist did not welcome the pictorial challenge offered by these detailed descriptions. Perhaps he preferred a summary and casual reference because it could most appropriately be illustrated in an equally summary manner.

The foregoing remarks may help to explain why the relationship between text and picture in this manuscript is neither as intimate nor as fruitful as might have been expected. This conclusion is all the more disappointing because no other medieval illustrated versions of the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* are known. But it is precisely the lack of a directly relevant model that would go far to explain the exemplary and unspecific nature of some of these illustrations.

The contrast with contemporary Iranian book painting is instructive. There the period from about 1290 to 1340 saw the production of the earliest illustrated versions of numerous texts, notably the *Usefulness of Animals* by Ibn Bukhtīshūʿ,<sup>19</sup> al-Bīrūnī's *Chronology*,<sup>20</sup> the *World History* of Rashīd al-Dīn,<sup>21</sup> and the *Shāhnāma*,<sup>22</sup> but including also such lesser manuscripts as the *Tānsūqnāma*,<sup>23</sup> the *Taʾrīkh-i Jahān Gushā* of Juvainī,<sup>24</sup> the *Marzubannāma*,<sup>25</sup> the *Dīwāns* of Muʿizzī and others,<sup>26</sup> and the *Muʾnis al-Aḥrār*.<sup>27</sup> These texts generated a flood of new images. Again and again the artist was stimulated by the text to produce some novel composition or some unexpected combination of familiar elements.<sup>28</sup> New relationships between text and picture were explored. Moreover, the existence of several versions of the *World History*, some now broken up and scattered, and the numerous copies of the *Shāhnāma*, culminating in the Demotte manuscript, show that certain texts were already popular. Despite this popularity, however, which in other Islamic painting traditions—notably that of Mamlūk Egypt—was apt to occasion a certain staleness and repetition,<sup>29</sup> the inventive powers of the Iranian artists scarcely slackened. Formulaic images certainly occur, especially in battle<sup>30</sup> and enthronement<sup>31</sup> scenes, but much is new. Viewed against this wider contemporary context, the painter of the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* can clearly be seen to have squandered, not to say funkied, a golden opportunity.

One may note in passing another consequence of the painter's somewhat confined imagination—the undue prominence given to human beings in these illustrations. It is, of course, hazardous to generalize on the basis of less than 10 percent of the projected total of illustrations. Nevertheless, it does seem slightly inappropriate to illustrate a book entitled *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* with so many pictures of human beings.<sup>32</sup> Some 30 percent of the pictures<sup>33</sup> are devoted wholly or in part to human beings, and it must be conceded that the incidents that these pictures depict are on occasion quite trivial (Fig. 1).<sup>34</sup> The text gives ample warrant for depicting only animals. It therefore seems possible that the artist chose to paint scenes with human beings in them because models for such scenes were ready to hand, notably in illustrated manuscripts of the *Maqāmāt*.<sup>35</sup> His practice in this respect accords entirely with the desire, manifested so obviously elsewhere in the book (Fig. 16),<sup>36</sup> to save time and effort whenever possible.

### *The Context of Fourteenth-Century Mamlūk Painting*

The position of the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* within fourteenth-century Mamlūk painting may be quickly summarized.

The apparent lack of royal, or even high official, patronage for these manuscripts has already been mentioned. Probably as a direct result of this, almost no Mamlūk manuscripts of the fourteenth century can match the quality of the paintings produced by the contemporary royal ateliers of Iran. Such ateliers ensured not only the best quality of work that could be had at the time but also its continuity. No such continuity can readily be detected in the best Mamlūk work of the period. To identify this "best work," of course, demands value judgments that are intrinsically hazardous; but they must be made. Probably only one manuscript of the period would be generally accepted as being of the first rank—the Vienna *Maqāmāt*. This very isolation raises serious questions about its provenience and patronage. Its lavish use of gold at a time when gold was in short supply<sup>37</sup> is shared by only one other fourteenth-century Mamlūk manuscript, the Oxford *Maqāmāt*, which indeed most closely rivals its quality. A third manuscript, the Escorial Bestiary, is related to both of these works in that its miniatures have a plain, completely colored background (Fig. 2).<sup>38</sup> To this trio should probably be added the Paris *Kaṭīla wa Dimna*, which is easily the most inventive and accomplished version of this picture cycle in Mamlūk painting.<sup>39</sup> These four manuscripts seem to stand well above other contemporary Mamlūk manuscripts in quality. The *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* may be placed in the category immediately below these and alongside such work as the Oxford *Kaṭīla wa Dimna*, the damaged British Library *Maqāmāt* of 1323,<sup>40</sup> and the *Sulwān al-Muḥaṣṣa* in Kuwait and Washington. Its most successful pictures, such as the depictions of the ostrich, the giraffe, and the mottled goat (Figs. 3–5), rank with the best of Mamlūk animal painting; but this level is not maintained, for the artist is too prone to repeat himself in his choice of animals and poses alike.

### *Use of Mesopotamian Models*

This repetition might be predictable in an artist who was illustrating a book that had never been illustrated before and whose forte was not inventiveness. If this were the case, there would be no need to embark on a marathon search for his models. Nevertheless, even if no pictorial tradition had developed for the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* itself, there were models aplenty in other illustrated texts for all kinds of animal depictions. A painter of this quality and technical assurance would surely have had access to such books.

He would also, one might add parenthetically, have encountered a quite different source of animal depictions, namely those on pottery. From Fāṭimid times onwards Egypt and, to a lesser extent, Syria had produced strikingly effective images of animals in

several styles. Some of these animals played a secondary role in narrative scenes and were depicted with a competent degree of realism.<sup>41</sup> More impressive, however, are the dishes in which the animals are the central if not the only theme and are subject to extremes of abstraction. The constant aim is to formulate a recognizable and lifelike image that can nevertheless be accommodated without visual strain within the plunging circular picture space of a dish. Two major modes may be distinguished: the heraldic and the silhouette. The heraldic mode adopted a formal, static, frontal pose well exemplified in a Fāṭimid luster dish depicting an eagle with outstretched wings (Fig. 6).<sup>42</sup> This convention clearly did not recommend itself to miniature painters. The silhouette manner was more promising from the manuscript painter's point of view (Fig. 7). Unlike the heraldic mode, it frequently employed stylized vegetal forms as a background accompaniment to, and almost a commentary on, the animal itself.<sup>43</sup> The animal or bird is shown in profile, frequently in lithe movement (Fig. 8).<sup>44</sup> These characteristics would naturally commend such images to book painters, yet there is no sign that such cross-fertilization took place. Perhaps the idea of transferring such images from one medium to another did not occur to book painters. Or they may have felt that the animals on pottery were too stylized to be employed in book painting, with its more realistic bias. They may have shied away from the problem of recomposing for use on a flat page images whose extreme disproportion was appropriate for the compositionally awkward three-dimensional form of pottery. Perhaps such pottery was produced for a different clientele; if so, this alone may have hindered free transmission of motifs between the two media. Moreover, such types of pottery were not current in Egypt or Syria in 1350—though it seems significant that thirteenth-century Syrian book painting on animal subjects betrays little if any sign that the painters were familiar with contemporary Raqqa pottery. All and all, it looks as though pottery and painting developed in separate compartments in thirteenth-century Egypt and Syria. Exactly the opposite case prevailed in Iran.<sup>45</sup>

If, then, the Ambrosian painter was not by nature an original and inventive artist, often sidestepping the challenge of devising entirely new images, and did not learn from painted pottery, his most likely source of inspiration would have been other illustrated books. On what sources did he depend? And how did he use them? The Syrian and Iraqi schools of the thirteenth century are the only prototypes that merit serious consideration. The Iḥārīrī manuscripts that were the staple of the Baghdad and Syrian schools are rich in animal depictions;<sup>46</sup> in fact, the paintings of camels by Yaḥyā al-Wāsiṭī in the so-called Schefer Iḥārīrī of 1237 in Paris (B.N. Arabe 5847) rank among the finest



animal paintings in the Islamic world.<sup>47</sup> Animal depictions also occur sporadically in the many manuscripts of the text *De Materia Medica* of Dioscorides,<sup>48</sup> the *Book of Fixed Stars* (*Kitāb Sūwar al-Kawākib al-Thābita*),<sup>49</sup> and the *Book of Antidotes* (*Kitāb al-Tiryāq*)<sup>50</sup>—the Byzantine *Theriaca* of Nicander<sup>51</sup> in Islamic dress. But there were also several illustrated texts largely devoted to animals: the *Book of Farriery* (*Kitāb al-Baiṭara*),<sup>52</sup> the *Description of Animals* (*Naʿt al-Ḥayawān*),<sup>53</sup> the *Wonders of Creation* (*ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt*),<sup>54</sup> and of course the fables of Bidpai (*Kaṭīla wa Dimna*).<sup>55</sup> These would be even more obvious sources for this painter to use (indeed, it would have been hard for any animal painter of the fourteenth century to have ignored them), although they did not represent—as did the illustrated *Maqāmāt*—the high-water mark of Mesopotamian painting.

Despite the different emphases of these various texts, their common focus on animals encouraged the establishment of certain pictorial conventions for such pictures.<sup>56</sup> These were inherited by Iranian and Mamlūk painters alike. The varying response of the painters to these inherited conventions exposes the basic character of each school. In Iran these conventions served merely as a base upon which to build. In Mamlūk paintings, however, they were apt to define the painter's scope and ultimately to circumscribe his vision. Thus, a misplaced fidelity to Mesopotamian pictorial conventions could result in fossilized technique and iconography. This can be demonstrated at least in the case under discussion as well as in the fourteenth-century Mamlūk *Kaṭīla wa Dimna* manuscripts in Munich, Paris, Oxford, and Cambridge.<sup>57</sup> Happily, this tendency does not affect all Mamlūk animal painting; the Escorial Bestiary, for instance, is an honorable exception, showing that the use of inherited conventions did not preclude the creation of an assured and splendid image. But the trend seems all too clear.

Some of these conventions may now be examined in greater detail. Perhaps the most striking feature is the absence of a background. The picture is painted directly onto the paper, without frame or background color (Fig. 9). This practice—a standard one in illuminated Byzantine scientific works,<sup>58</sup> which themselves perpetuated classical models—had numerous side effects. Most significant was its impact on the principal subject matter. It rendered the image neutral and timeless, distancing it and frequently investing it with a heraldic quality, which is, incidentally, echoed in certain Mamlūk blazons.<sup>59</sup> In a sense this formality was, to borrow a term from literary criticism, an “objective correlative” to the type of text—usually a bestiary—in which the animal is characterized by a few Theophrastic phrases and deliberately not set in a real-life context. Certain practical advantages accrued from the absence of a closely defined background.

Borrowing from other media such as ceramics and textiles was facilitated. Attention was made to focus exclusively on the image. Obviously, the entire picture was quicker and easier to execute than one of similar quality but with a detailed background. Occasionally—as in the Escorial Bestiary—the image was formalized still further by the use of a monochrome background, a device that implied a more carefully finished painting and thus laid a certain onus on the artist.

A second widespread convention governed the size of the animal *vis-à-vis* the picture as a whole. Here a distinction must be drawn between narrative and non-narrative scenes. In narrative scenes—such as abound in *Kaṭīla wa Dimna* manuscripts, where the function of the text is to tell a story rather than describe an animal—the presence of two or more protagonists inevitably requires a reduction in scale, often accentuated by the need to provide at least a rudimentary setting.<sup>60</sup> In images with no narrative intention, however, such as many illustrations of the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, the great size of the animal in relation to the whole picture space can be most marked (Fig. 10). The same process can be seen in illustrated Byzantine scientific manuscripts: compare the *Theriaca* of Nicander, which uses small figures in a realized landscape,<sup>61</sup> with the large, dominating, and essentially didactic pictures of plants in a typical Dioscorides manuscript.<sup>62</sup> In the case of the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* it is as if the artist had nothing else to say. Certainly, the image is too big to allow any secondary theme to develop, even though the text often gives ample occasion to introduce such themes. Only in a single case is a second animal depicted—without the express authorization of the text<sup>63</sup>—perhaps because the models that the artist was using did not have one, though the desire to keep secondary detail to a minimum is an abiding characteristic of this artist. The image has a larger-than-life quality. This convention too, then, operates as a distancing agent.

A third convention with the same effect is the preference for a profile depiction (Fig. 11). At one stroke this makes the animal a *topos* and cuts it off from the viewer. It eliminates the possibility of depicting a varied interaction between animals, for example a female with her young. The artificiality of this convention is emphasized by the fact that the animals almost always face left (Fig. 12). It must be admitted, however, that this convention excellently suits the linear style of the Ambrosian manuscript.

Interestingly, while the profile mode is virtually *de rigueur* for animals, it is sedulously avoided in depicting human beings (Fig. 13). Of the thirty-two pictures in the Ambrosian manuscript, ten show people. Twenty-three people are shown in these pictures, and, although their poses frequently demand a profile

rendering (Fig. 14), only one of them is shown thus (Fig. 15). Byzantine influence, though obviously operating at several removes, must be reckoned with here. It was above all in Byzantine art that various shades of meaning had gradually come to be associated with full-face, three-quarter-view, and profile renderings of people. Clearly, the negative connotations that the profile view had long since acquired in Byzantine religious iconography<sup>64</sup>—it is the mode normally used for Judas—were sufficiently strong to restrict its use in Islamic manuscripts such as this one. It would be possible to infer from this evidence of familiarity with Christian iconography<sup>65</sup> that the artist used models of the Mosul school, whose connection with Syro-Jacobite painting has long been known.<sup>66</sup> Painters of the Baghdad school, on the other hand, which represents an alternative tradition, freely used the profile mode. But the grouping of the Ambrosian figures is, paradoxically enough, reminiscent of works of the Baghdad school.<sup>67</sup> There seems no reason to doubt that works of both schools could well have been available to a Mamlūk painter, and he took from each tradition what suited him.

The profile is also associated with certain stereotyped poses. Thus, in animals of canine type the extended nearside hind leg is always cocked in the form of a rectangle, and the right front paw is nearly always lifted off the ground (Fig. 16). The artist is not above purloining this pose for other animals, either in its entirety (e.g., the hare on f. 5a—Fig. 17) or in part (e.g., the lion on f. 3a—Fig. 18). The excessive use of such formulas brings into question the much-vaunted realism of Islamic animal painting, at least in the Ambrosian manuscript.

The artist is curiously cavalier in his use of the ground-line, so much so that it seems he has not fully grasped what that convention implies. Frequently plants grow directly on the ground-line while animals float uneasily above it (Fig. 19); sometimes their feet cut right through it. It is hard to see why, having adopted this admittedly arbitrary but already long-hallowed schema,<sup>68</sup> the artist should fail so signally to use it in the accepted way. The ground-line itself is interpreted in the most literal way as a thin straight line, though in a couple of folios at the end of the manuscript this is replaced by an equally straight thick slab (Fig. 20)—perhaps an inspiration that came too late to be much use. Admittedly, this ground-line convention is hostile to the depiction of multiple planes; indeed, illusionism is better served when it is absent. The limited and unimaginative way in which the ground-line functions in this manuscript exemplifies the persistent desire to pare the picture to the bone. Economy of time and effort seems to have been the artist's watchword.<sup>69</sup>

Mention of the ground-line invites a more general discussion of the nature and function of the landscape elements in this manuscript. Unless the text calls for some particular feature of this kind—such as the pool of water in the scenes showing a boar or crocodile and various fishes (Figs. 21 and 22)—landscape is rendered almost telegraphically by a few large, stylized plants, never more than four in all. Thus, the images seem to represent an uneasy marriage of a bestiary with a Dioscorides manuscript. This is most obvious when the plants grow taller than the elephants or horse and ass that they flank (Fig. 23).<sup>70</sup> A similar comment applies to the unintentionally absurd way in which a large vegetal organism, not yet recognizably a tree or a plant, seems to function as a luxuriant tail for the giraffe on f. 26a (Fig. 4). The plants cannot be recognized in the way that the animals can, which emphasizes their symbolic and compositional role and suggests that in executing them the artist metaphorically kept his eyes shut. This is even truer of one form that seems to be this artist's own invention—a curious type of vegetation that resembles a tall, flexible post crowned with a bud (Fig. 24).<sup>71</sup> Its effect is to provide a much more dominant visual accent than do the other plants; indeed, it functions in an almost architectural fashion. The fact that the artist was not constrained to render nature, as he was in Dioscorides manuscripts for instance, may help to explain the varied forms of these ideographic plants.

The pictures usually contain two plants, one on each side of the central image (Fig. 25). Never are they allowed to cluster, as in nature, or to obscure the image. Even when several of them are laid out at intervals throughout the picture, it is the animal that overlaps them, not vice versa (Fig. 26). Their placing is itself enough to establish that their principal role is to frame the scene.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, they often sway and curl in obedience to the outline of the animal in question—though this feature could also be interpreted as an attempt to disguise their otherwise patently obvious framing function. These plants are most obtrusive in depictions of a single creature whose outlines form a square or a vertical rectangle—that is, in a strongly centralized composition.<sup>73</sup> Conversely, they are used with most freedom, are most summary, and indeed are most likely to be omitted altogether, in images that are elongated horizontally (Fig. 27). Occasionally they occur singly, especially if they are placed opposite massed blocks of color (Fig. 28).<sup>74</sup> It seems clear that when the artist laid out his pictures, he thought of these plants as blocks, and the number and density of their leaves reinforce this image.

The almost exclusive emphasis on plants as a decorative accompaniment to the main theme, and the fact that these plants are subjected to a high degree



of formal abstraction in which their compositional role is often paramount, suggests that the depiction of landscape was not the artist's prime concern. These features find parallels in other media of Islamic art, where the question of landscape does not even arise. Thus, it may be a mistake to interpret the plants in the Ambrosian paintings primarily as landscape indicators. The similarities between the Ambrosian paintings and those on the pottery of Fāṭimid Egypt and Raqqa have already been noted in the context of animal painting. These similarities are relevant also to the use of vegetation in the Ambrosian pictures in that the latter also illustrate, but in a new or at least an abbreviated form, the ancient motif of an animal amidst foliage. In the Islamic minor arts of pre-Mamlūk times, for example in ivory and metalwork, this foliage obeys a circular or undulating rhythm and thus provides a convenient frame for the image.<sup>75</sup> It is tempting to derive such forms from the classical and early Byzantine "inhabited" or "peopled" scroll,<sup>76</sup> and this seems especially justifiable when the vigorous survival of Coptic traditions in early Islamic Egypt is taken into account. Such plants may therefore have a largely compositional function as filler devices or space dividers.

Clearly, the vegetation in the Ambrosian pictures can be interpreted in several different ways. These are not, however, mutually exclusive. In particular, its use as a framing device seems beyond dispute. However, only the sides of the image are framed in this way; there is no corresponding closing-off device at the top, though sometimes the tips of the plants incline inwards to suggest a roof.<sup>77</sup> It is perhaps worth asking why the artist was content to let the text serve this function of providing the upper "margin" and yet on the whole chose not to use the text below the picture in the same way. It can scarcely be maintained that the scenes that actually are so treated (and incidentally lack the symbolic vegetation) suffer as a result. Even in such cases, however, the base of the picture is apt to be so straight that the artist seems to have worked from a faint ruled line that he later erased—so that a ground-line implicitly divides text from picture even when absent.<sup>78</sup> One may conclude that the ground-line was an inherited convention that the artist used almost absent-mindedly and indeed seems occasionally to have forgotten to use altogether. Elements that functioned as notations of rhythm, interval, and space division were more congenial to him. Where the opportunity presents itself, the framing plants are replaced by secondary—and textually redundant—human figures flanking the major one.<sup>79</sup> Clearly, the tripartite composition came naturally to this artist. It was one of several formulas on which he could ring a few changes and thus avoid having to rethink a composition afresh.

A word about the picture space available to the artist

concludes this analysis of conventional elements in the Ambrosian manuscript. It seems likely that at the outset a decision was made to keep the illustrations of this text compositionally simple and accordingly to pare the image to its essentials. It would follow, then, that they could usually be accommodated without hardship in the central one-third of the page, with substantial bodies of text above and below. This is exactly what happened. Any much larger picture space might have revealed their essentially simple—not to say simplistic—quality in none too favorable a light. This generous allocation of space gave the image room to breathe, so to speak, in contrast to the small illustrations in a cramped space that are so often found in *Kaṭīla wa Dimna* manuscripts. Occasionally, two separate images occupy a single page, though divided by a slab of text; in such cases they take up the whole length of the page between them. Occasionally, too, an image takes up most of the page. Although such pictures would lose very little by being reduced to half their present size, they would look absurd if they occupied twice as much space on the page. There is no need to labor the difference between these images and, say, the more ambitious *Maqāmāt* manuscripts of thirteenth-century Syria and Iraq. In such *Maqāmāt* illustrations the text is frequently reduced to a single line, which functions as the notional base line for the picture. With this minor exception, the picture becomes essentially a full-page image, with a concomitant complexity of layout. Moreover, in such manuscripts the picture size often varies significantly from page to page, thereby encouraging a whole range of relationships between text and illustration, and incidentally making the book visually more stimulating, for the dimension of surprise is introduced. By contrast, the ratio of text to picture on any given page of the Ambrosian manuscript is fixed, if the surviving illustrations provide a fair sample. This practice is quite understandable in the case of such an extensive text, all the more so since the evidence suggests that a single artist was responsible for the surviving pictures and may well have planned to execute the entire corpus of illustrations. If this were the case, a consistently simple format would have suited his purposes admirably.

The discussion so far has emphasized the elements that the artist inherited from Mesopotamian painting and was content to reproduce, fundamentally unenriched, in his turn. One can go further, however, and note a positive reduction in scope and variety. Received traditions served to cripple the artist's imagination. The figure types clearly derive from Ḥarīrī illustrations; but here they are jerky, their grouping formalized, their gestures wooden.<sup>80</sup> Fewer people are depicted—no picture has more than three, a far cry from the bustling masses of the earlier Ḥarīrī

manuscripts—and the background of architecture and furnishings that enlivens these *Maqāmāt* paintings is cut down to a few symbolic references.<sup>81</sup> The variety of movement that is so marked in Mesopotamian animal painting has been drastically reduced. The animals do not run at full speed, look over their shoulders, or move abreast of one another—in fact only one of them in the whole manuscript is seated.<sup>82</sup> None is shown affronted or addorsed. The artist misses the opportunity of depicting males and females together so as to explain their different characteristics,<sup>83</sup> thereby showing that he does not have a specialized zoological interest.

The exception to this, and the only relatively novel feature, is the frequent depiction of copulation and related sexual themes—an iconographic quirk only partially explained by the text.<sup>84</sup> Thirteen of the thirty-two illustrations refer directly or indirectly to sexual matters (Figs. 23, 27–29, and 35),<sup>85</sup> and in this it seems justifiable to detect a personal *idée fixe* of the painter; the subject certainly holds no such dominating position in the text of al-Jāhīz. The painter, however, eagerly grasped at the flimsiest pretext offered by casual anecdote or digression in the text. Perhaps the extreme case is f. 36a, which seems at first sight to be a standard *ḍiḡwān* scene, with an enthroned dignitary holding a scroll and flanked by attendants (Fig. 30). It transpires, however, that the picture illustrates an anecdote concerning a slip of the pen. The Umayyad Caliph Hishēm, it seems, wrote to one of his governors ordering, “Let the weaklings who are with you be castrated,” which was simply a scribal error for “Let the weaklings who are with you be counted.”<sup>86</sup> The artist actually regarded this footnote as worthy of illustration.

Other examples of the progressive atrophy of Mesopotamian conventions may owe something to the shadow theatre.<sup>87</sup> Virtually all the creatures are shown in profile, facing left, and in poses that are sometimes repeated quite mechanically. The same reduction makes itself felt in landscape: rocks, trees, mountains, and rivers are on the whole conspicuously absent. Water, the sole exception, is treated with geometrical patterning as if it were costume.<sup>88</sup>

The selection of animals depicted also points in this direction. In these thirty-two illustrations may be found three lions, three roosters, three donkeys, and no less than nine dogs or closely related animals. It is true that al-Jāhīz himself expatiates on the dog at quite inordinate length, but none of these nine depictions can refer to the main chapter on the dog because the Ambrosian text does not contain that section,<sup>89</sup> while another chapter on the dog comes from the unillustrated section of the manuscript.<sup>90</sup> Thus, once again the artist chose to illustrate digressions from the main theme at the expense of the main theme itself. The

blame for this impoverishment must be laid at the door of the artist, for the text gave him endless opportunities for experiment and innovation. One can imagine what the artist of the Schefer Ḥarīrī, Yahyā al-Wāsiṭī, would have made of it. To judge by the animal depictions alone, the Ambrosian text might just as well have been the briefest of bestiaries.

All this no doubt sounds very negative and ignores the charm that bright colors,<sup>91</sup> fluent draftsmanship, and, intermittently at least, an instinctive insight into the nature of the animal lend to these miniatures. They are fun, and they admirably fulfill their role as illustrations. But they can scarcely claim to be masterpieces, for, as in nearly all Mamlūk paintings, the artist has been concerned principally to produce an illustration. The ambition to produce a fine self-contained picture has been secondary—if it has been there at all. These two aims are of course not mutually exclusive. Indeed, it might be fairer to say that much of the finest Iranian painting of the fourteenth century is also primarily book illustration but that the Iranian artist took his duty as an illustrator very much more seriously than his Mamlūk counterpart. It was because he thought out his pictures so carefully and built up a wealth of corroborative and expressive detail in them that he created, so to speak incidentally, masterpieces. This series of illustrations begins with some of the paintings in the Pierpont Morgan Bestiary of 1290, which may now be examined.

### *The ʿIlkhānīd Tradition*

Because the illustrations in the Pierpont Morgan Bestiary are much better known than the Ambrosian ones,<sup>92</sup> there is no need to dwell on them at such length. They were produced at Marāgha, in northwest Iran, for an unknown patron who may have been connected with the court. The illustrations accompany a popular bestiary text of medieval Islam—the *Manāfiʿ al-Ḥayawān* (*The Usefulness of Animals*), written by the eleventh-century physician Ibn Bukhtīshūʿ.

In content this bestiary belongs firmly within the tradition of those practical treatises, scientific in their own time, that had long been popular in Mesopotamia and were, via Byzantium, a legacy from the Graeco-Roman past.<sup>93</sup> The painting of Adam and Eve, however, strikes a new note (Fig. 31).<sup>94</sup> It is placed, significantly enough, at the very beginning of the manuscript and is followed by one of Cain killing Abel.<sup>95</sup> Other contemporary Iranian manuscripts share this interest in Old and New Testament themes<sup>96</sup> and thus, it seems, reflect the persistent curiosity and tolerance that the ʿIl-Khāns showed toward other faiths. It may also be connected with the Indian summer of prosperity and power enjoyed briefly by the Jews and



the Oriental Christian minorities under the Mongol rulers from Hülegü to Gaykhātū.<sup>97</sup> This kind of connection with contemporary society would be hard to demonstrate in the case of the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*.

Stylistically, the painting of Adam and Eve is recognizably of the Baghdad school. The haloes, the vegetation, the plain background, even the notably corpulent Eve all betray Arab taste. But the careful shading of Adam's robe is a Chinese feature,<sup>98</sup> while the bland, jowly faces are survivals of the Saljūq tradition in Persia as expressed in painted pottery. The stress on calligraphy, a trait shared with the slightly later Bīrūnī manuscript,<sup>99</sup> is evident in the way that the huge black letters stand out like banner headlines against their white ground. Their importance is such that the calligrapher has plunged deep into the picture space rather than deprive a single letter of its redundant terminal flourish—thereby hampering the artist severely when he came to paint Adam's halo. But the very fact that the painter did not recompose his picture to avoid having the calligraphy near the halo epitomizes the purely decorative role to which the halo had sunk in the Arab tradition perpetuated here. The artist's eagerness to exploit calligraphy also helps to explain the unusual variety of scripts employed in the text. Sometimes it is used as a make-weight for, or even as a commentary on, the ostensible subject—as in the case of the battling moufflon, where the calligraphy partakes of the excitement of the action (Fig. 32). This bestiary inhabits a different imaginative world from that of its Arab equivalents (Fig. 33). The Ambrosian manuscript, for instance, thought written in a very elegant hand, makes no attempt to exploit calligraphy by means of elaborate chapter headings and captions.

The clue to the success of the Iranian painter lies partly in his fondness for drama. He invests essentially undramatic subjects with a portentous power wholly at variance with the stiff, woodenly articulated animals of most Arab bestiaries. A vivid sense of tremendous forces unleashed informs the miniature of two elephants entwined (Fig. 34).<sup>100</sup> The circular lines modeling them create such a formidable vortex that the animals seem quite naturally confined by the frame. It may be a deliberate effect of wit that the foliage alone breaks out. In such a concentrated composition any stress on calligraphy would be superfluous, and the artist has wisely omitted even an explanatory heading for the picture. Interestingly, the text gives no particular warrant for this remarkably original image or for its details:<sup>101</sup>

and warm water and he gets well. One dram of his ivory is good for leprosy; a piece of an elephant's skin tied on the body stops the ague; his fat relieves headaches when it is burned and the patient sits on the fumes.<sup>102</sup>

Both text and illustration on this subject in the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* bring the reader down to earth with a bump (Fig. 35). The text reads, "When [one among] their males are [is] in a strait, they help him in such wise that another male covers him, and this done he will calm down completely."<sup>103</sup> It is curious that the artist should have chosen this particular section of the text for illustration since al-Jāhīz discusses this animal for several pages. One can only guess at the effect such an image might have had in Western Europe, where a twelfth-century English bestiary, for example (Fig. 36),<sup>104</sup> would begin the corresponding chapter as follows: "There is an animal called the elephant, which has no desire to copulate,"<sup>105</sup> a remarkable statement which has stung one translator of the text, T. H. White, into producing a learned and at times scabrous footnote quoting the views of Solinus, Pliny, and Albertus Magnus on the matter and concluding, "The copulation of elephants was a matter for speculation in the dark ages, and still is, as it is rarely witnessed. . . . In fact, they copulate in the ordinary way and, according to Lieut.-Colonel C. H. Williams, more gracefully than most."<sup>106</sup> There one may perhaps leave the subject.

Drama is again the keynote in the depiction of the Chinese phoenix, identified elsewhere on the page as the Persian *šimurgh* and the Arabic *'anqa* (Fig. 37). Here the sinuous rippling line of the bird's head and tail calls for a correspondingly cursive and seemingly relaxed script. The formal, angular Kūfic hand used earlier would be inappropriate here. No miniature in the bestiary is more infused with the Chinese spirit. This spirit expresses itself in the wayward curves of the frame, curling like a parchment scroll, in the calligraphic jottings that so readily suggest random clumps of grass, and in the shaded overlapping planes that give the design depth. Even the blue surround, with its languid irregular scrolls, is of Chinese inspiration. Yet the artist's relish of color, especially his daring juxtaposition of tones, presages developments later in the century and could be regarded as a local trait. To some extent this decorative bias has led the artist astray, for it is hard to equate this gaudy fowl with the information given in the text: "The *Šimurgh*, found in inaccessible islands and near the equator, is fearless beyond all other animals."<sup>107</sup> He can carry off exceedingly large animals like the elephant and the rhinoceros and when he does, rocks quake and tremble."<sup>108</sup>

But it is precisely his untrammelled imagination<sup>109</sup> that has made it possible for the artist to depart so far from his text. As in the case of the elephants, the text

An elephant lives three or four hundred years; the animals with the longer tusks have a longer life. The elephant is afraid of a young pig and a horned ram but he is annoyed most of all by the gnat and the mouse. When an elephant is tired, people rub his feet with oil

did not restrict him; it served merely as a point of departure. Hence the wide range of poses in the manuscript: the animals are shown singly or in pairs, face left or right, are shown frontally or from behind, upside down, turning the head, sitting on their haunches or intertwined in scenes of violence or tenderness. Secondary planes are established by the liberal use of overlap. The background varies from picture to picture, displaying a wide variety of landscape elements—water, grass, trees, rocks, bushes, flowering plants, and coulisses (Fig. 38). Birds perch among the plants.<sup>110</sup> As is natural with such an experimental approach, the picture size varies dramatically,<sup>111</sup> and at times the artist seems to go out of his way to choose a difficult subject (Fig. 39).<sup>112</sup> One example must suffice: “One of the wonderful traits of the mountain goat is that he leaps down from places that are at a height of about a hundred spears, and stands on his horns.”<sup>113</sup> The artist, nothing daunted, does his best to render this marvel—which is, incidentally, sober fact—and if the effect is more curious than beautiful, its originality is not in dispute (Fig. 40). Not so that of the text, for the appropriate entry in a typical twelfth-century English bestiary reads, “There is an animal called IBEX the chamois, which has two horns. And such is the strength of these that, if it is hurled down from a high mountain peak to the very depths, its whole body will be preserved unhurt by these two.”<sup>114</sup> In view of the great popularity of the Latin bestiary, and the numerous Western diplomats and merchants who thronged the ʿIlkīd capitals, it might not be entirely fanciful to suggest the possibility of some cultural interchange in this particular sphere. But despite many seductive visual<sup>115</sup> and textual analogies between Islamic and Western bestiaries,<sup>116</sup> two basic differences of approach require emphasis. First, the Latin bestiary drew moral and especially theological lessons from the animals it described;<sup>117</sup> and secondly, a great many of its creatures were fabulous.<sup>118</sup> In Islamic bestiaries the medicinal value of the animal is stressed,<sup>119</sup> and very few fabulous creatures occur. The *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* does emphasize the character traits of certain animals,<sup>120</sup> but it does not take the crucial further step of drawing the obvious analogy with mankind for homiletic purposes.

In fact the European connections are insignificant compared to the intrusive, even at times dominating, influence of Chinese art in this manuscript. In the tiny pictures of magpies (Fig. 41),<sup>121</sup> the artist has used landscape indicators as stereotyped as any comparable feature in Mesopotamian painting. In this case they comprise a close-up of a tree whose almost leafless branches grow at random intervals, their forms suggested by a few sure, impressionistic strokes. But not only are these of Chinese, not Iraqi, origin; their use

in combination with birds is itself a quintessentially Chinese idea. Similarly, such features as the mare’s head cut off by the frame<sup>122</sup> imply a knowledge of Chinese handscrolls and exploit the idea of treating the frame as a window on the world—a convention new to Islamic painting. It is symptomatic that when Mamlūk painting of this very period uses the related device of the deliberately broken frame (cf. Fig. 42), the resultant clumsiness betrays a profound misunderstanding of the spatial implications of the broken frame. In the *Sulwān al-Muḥaṣṣa* manuscript, the animal that breaks into the frame is simply superimposed upon it with no serious attempt to interlock the areas inside and outside the frame (Fig. 43).<sup>123</sup>

In other paintings in the Morgan Bestiary tree boles, flowering branches, rocks, marshy terrain, and a host of other features also have a Chinese origin. Rather than itemize these features, however, it might be more interesting to ask whether Persian painters really learned much from Chinese sources. The answer is certainly not a clear affirmative. The Chinese conventions for landscape elements were taken over virtually wholesale, but in a somewhat uncomprehending and uncritical fashion.<sup>124</sup> They function as a kind of visual shorthand. Moreover, the changes these conventions undergo are most significant: features that should be randomly disposed are made symmetrical, muted tones are replaced by vivid color contrasts, blurred outlines are sharpened. These transformations are already evident in the Morgan Bestiary, and they stamp the borrowings as chinoiserie rather than expressions of a sinicizing style. By the end of the fourteenth century, in the illustrations to the *mathnavī*s of Khwajū Kirmānī, dated 798/1396 (British Library, Add. 18118),<sup>125</sup> Chinese landscape notations have finally been incorporated into the visual vocabulary of Persian artists and lost much of their Far Eastern flavor. In the process, however, Chinese works of art had opened the eyes of Persian painters to the potential of landscape as a means of expression<sup>126</sup> and—at least to some extent—as a theme in its own right.<sup>127</sup>

If Persian landscapes became less Chinese as the fourteenth century wore on, they nevertheless developed a distinctive local idiom in this field that did ultimately owe a good deal to Chinese inspiration. Moreover, at intervals throughout that century and in key manuscripts, Persian artists were able to take up Chinese landscape themes and use them with surprising freshness, integrating them into their pictures with signal success. In the manuscript of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *World History*, dated 714/1314, the depiction of the sacred grove in which the Buddha received enlightenment well illustrates this ability.<sup>128</sup> From a slightly later version of the same text comes a picture of Mongol cavalry breasting a foaming torrent whose



swirls, eddies, and spume-flecked waves are remarkably close to contemporary Chinese models.<sup>129</sup> Similarly, in the Demotte *Shāhnāma*, the lowering hillside, thickly forested, gashed by ravines and strewn with boulders—from which a dragon spits defiance at Iskandar and his men<sup>130</sup>—is again a noteworthy attempt to recreate the mood of a certain type of Chinese landscape setting.<sup>131</sup> For all that, it is a backcloth—an excellent complement to the action, to be sure, but no longer a subject in its own right. Man and his deeds have usurped the limelight.

In the next generation this process repeats itself, but in a completely different way. The surviving leaves of the great *Kalīla wa Dimna* manuscript in Istanbul (University Library, F.1422), tentatively attributed by Grube<sup>132</sup> to Aḥmad Mūsā, consistently create a narrow well of space at the side of the picture and fill it with a closely observed study of a tree or branches (Fig. 44).<sup>133</sup> Usually these branches bear blossoms that stand out with absolute clarity against the unpainted surface of the page. Executed as they are with surpassing sensitivity and precision, these botanical studies cannot but recall a well-established genre of Chinese painting—plum branches in blossom, clumps of bamboo, and so on. However, by a simple process of transposition, a theme that in Chinese painting was self-sufficient has been integrated into a wider setting, and as a secondary theme at that.

These remarks call into question the idea of a linear development of Persian landscape painting in the fourteenth century, with an initially strong Chinese influence gradually becoming weaker and overlaid by native modes. Any overview of the period must also take account of the cyclical nature of Chinese influence, a phenomenon that can be noted again in the following century.<sup>134</sup> In a broadly similar way, though admittedly for a much longer period, the artists of medieval Byzantium could draw at will upon a surprisingly untainted classical heritage.

With the growing importance of landscape in fourteenth-century Iran came a reappraisal of animal painting. Clearly, the Mesopotamian outline style, which was well adapted to a plain background, could not coexist with a developed landscape.<sup>135</sup> It was obviously desirable to show animals in natural movement against such a background, and, for that matter, to depict

their characteristics—their color, their typical stance, and the texture of their fur or skin—as accurately as possible.<sup>136</sup> In these respects, as in the exploitation of a pronounced vein of caricature,<sup>137</sup> Chinese painting could give useful leads.<sup>138</sup> The precise medium and mode of transmission that brought such ideas to Iran is by no means clear. There can be no doubt, however, as to the impact of such borrowings. By the middle of the fourteenth century, or very soon after, and following the achievement of a developed landscape style, the peaceful or violent interaction of animals could at last be presented convincingly.<sup>139</sup> The stage was set for the Istanbul Library *Kalīla wa Dimna* leaves, usually dated ca. 1360-70. Here all the picture space is used. In fact large portions of the picture repeatedly burst out of the actual or implied frame.<sup>140</sup> Moreover, the detail is often carefully chosen to augment and intensify the main theme. Landscape has become a vehicle for drama, for the realistic presentation of narrative, and for secondary comment on the principal subject.<sup>141</sup>

Manuscripts like the Morgan Bestiary provided an indispensable bridge between works like these and the Mesopotamian school. Yet the differences between these two contemporary schools of manuscript painting can scarcely be overemphasized. In Iran, the range of books, subject matter, patrons, and centers for painting was very much wider than in Egypt. Reciprocal influences between the two countries in the fourteenth century have been noted in such fields as metalwork and architectural tilework<sup>142</sup> but seem not to have operated to any significant degree in manuscript painting.<sup>143</sup> Perhaps the explanation for this lies in the fact that Mamlūk book painting illustrated texts that were not part of the repertoire of Iranian artists. Quite aside from these various differences, however, an essentially inward-looking orientation marks much of Mamlūk painting. Egypt, which for political reasons was sundered from contact with the Mongol realm and thus with China, experienced no such transfusion as was vouchsafed to Iranian painting in the late thirteenth century. Its painters seemed unable to look beyond the horizons of their grandfathers. Hence the archaic nature of the Ambrosian manuscript. There were no clues here for further developments. For all its charm and color it is, when judged by the highest standards of the time, an epilogue.

## Notes

1. The exceptions are as follows:
  - 1) The *Automata* of al-Jazarī, dated 755/1354, of which the mutilated original is in Istanbul: Süleymaniye Library, no. 3606. See the translation and commentary by D. R. Hill: *The Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices (Kitāb fi maʿrifat al-ḥiyāl al-handasiyya)* by Ibn al-Razzāz al-Jazarī, Dordrecht, 1974, and the review of it by J. M. Rogers, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, v. 33, no. 5–6, 1976, pp. 358–63.
  - 2) The *Nihāyat al-sulwāʾ al-lumniyya fi taʿallum al-māl al-furūsiyya* by Muḥammad al-Aqsarāʾī, British Library, Ms. Add. 18866. See G. Tantom, “Muslim Warfare: A Study of a Medieval Muslim Treatise on the Art of War,” in R. Elgood, ed. *Islamic Arms and Armour*, London, 1979, pp. 187–201, and G. R. Smith, *Medieval Muslim Horsemanship: A Fourteenth-Century Arabic Cavalry Manual*, London, 1979; and, on the Chester Beatty ms., D. James, “Mamluke Painting at the Time of the ‘Lusignan Crusade’, 1365–70,” *Humaniora Islamica*, v. 2, 1974, pp. 73–87.
  - 3) The *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī in the Nationalbibliothek, Vienna (A.F.9). See K. Holter, “Die Galen-Handschrift und die Makamen des Ḥarīrī der Wiener Nationalbibliothek,” *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, N.F. 11, 1937, pp. 1–48, Special Number 104.
  - 4) The *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī in the British Library, Or. 9718. See J. D. Haldane, “A Ḥarīrī Manuscript and Its Relevance to Mamlūk Painting,” unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1973, pp. 127–70, figs. 45–122.
  - 5) The Oxford *Kalīla wa Dimna* of 755/1354 (Bodleian Library, Pococke 400). See E. Atīl, *Kalīla wa Dimna: Fables from a Fourteenth-Century Arabic Manuscript*, Washington, D.C., 1981.
  - 6) The undated Munich *Kalīla wa Dimna*. See H.-C. Graf v. Bothmer, *Kalīla und Dimna. Ibn al Muqaffa’s Fabelbuch in einer mittelalterlichen Bilderhandschrift*, Wiesbaden, 1981.
  - 7) The manuscript of the *Sulwān al-Muṭaʿ* in a private collection in Kuwait has been published by A. S. Melikian-Chirvani: *Sulwān al-Muṭaʿ fi ʿUdūwān al-Aḥbāʿ. A Rediscovered Masterpiece of Arab Literature and Painting*, Kuwait, 1985.
  - 8) The Escorial Bestiary, a manuscript of the *Manāfiʿ al-Ḥayawān (The Usefulness of Animals)* by Ibn al-Durāhim al-Mauṣilī, has been published in color facsimile in a limited edition by a Spanish bank.  
For a good survey of some of the wider problems posed by Mamlūk painting, see Rachel Astor (now Ward), “The Sources of Mamluk Painting,” unpublished M.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1981.
2. “Ambrosian Fragments of an Illuminated Manuscript Containing the Zoology of al-Ġāhiz,” with a contribution by C. J. Lamm, “The Miniatures: Their Origin and Style,” *Uppsala Universitets Årsskrift*, v. 5, 1946, pp. 7–39; all the miniatures are illustrated, and Löfgren translates the relevant portion of the text for each.
3. Löfgren, “Ambrosian,” p. 20.
4. On p. 35 Lamm claims—without giving the necessary evidence—that it is characteristic of the fourteenth-century Mamlūk style. On p. 38 the implication is that he dates the ms. between ca. 1300 and ca. 1350. R. Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, Geneva, 1962, p. 156, dates the paintings “to the second quarter of the fourteenth century,” and, without resolving the contradiction, to “the middle of the fourteenth century.”  
J. D. Haldane dates them “mid to late 14th century,” (*Mamluk Painting*, Warminster, 1978, p. 78), and A. R. Zaky to the fourteenth century (“Medieval Arab Arms,” in Elgood, *Islamic Arms*, p. 210).
5. Löfgren, “Ambrosian,” p. 21.
6. Though E. J. Grube suggests that the *Kitāb al-Makhzūn Jāmiʿ al-Funūn*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. arabe 2824, dated 875/1470, might have been produced for Sulṭān Qāʾit Bay; see his “Pre-Mongol and Mamluk Painting,” in B. W. Robinson, ed. *Islamic Painting and the Arts of the Book*, London, 1976, p. 116.
7. All earlier studies have now been superseded by D. James, *Qurʾāns of the Mamlūks*, London, 1988.
8. This was Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad walad al-janāb al-ʿālī al-marḥūm Ḥusām al-Dīn Ṭarantāʾī, who ordered the Oxford *Maqāmāt*, dated 738/1337, Bodleian Library, Marsh 458. See Haldane, *Mamluk Painting*, p. 83, with full bibliography.
9. See M. R. James, ed., *The Bestiary: Being a Reproduction in Full of the Manuscript li. 4. 26 in the University Library, Cambridge, with Supplementary Plates from Other Manuscripts of English Origin, and a Preliminary Study of the Latin Bestiary as Current in England*, Oxford, 1928, p. 2; and F. McCulloch, *Mediaeval Latin and French Bestiaries*, Chapel Hill, 1962, pp. 15–20 (the Greek *Physiologus*) and pp. 21–44 (the Latin *Physiologus*). For the text, see *Physiologus*, tr. from the Latin by M. J. Curley, Austin, 1979.
10. Löfgren, “Ambrosian,” p. 18.
11. For examples, compare details from the standard Western bestiary as translated by T. H. White, *The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts*, New York, 1954, with others from the text of Ibn Bukhtīshūʿ, partially translated in D. Stewart, *Early Islam*, Weert, 1967, s.v. unicorn/rhinoceros (White, p. 21; Stewart, p. 139), elephant (White, p. 26; Stewart, p. 134), and camel (White, p. 80; Stewart, p. 137). Cf. also nn. 101–2 below for a more extended correspondence.
12. It is most easily accessible in the substantial anthology from it translated by C. Pellat, *The Life and Works of Jāhiz*, tr. from the French by D. M. Hawke, London, 1969, pp. 130–85, to which may be added his comments on the work in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. al-Djāhiz, col. 386.
13. See F. Viré, *El<sup>2</sup>*, s.v. Kalb, pp. 490–91; G. R. Smith and M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, *The Book of the Superiority of Dogs over Many of Those Who Wear Clothes by Ibn al-Marzubān*, Warminster, 1978, pp. xxvii, xxix–xxxi, xxxiii–xxxiv; Pellat, *Life*, pp. 136–47; and Löfgren, “Ambrosian,” pp. 15, 17, 25.
14. To cite only examples of Mamlūk date, the *Sulwān al-Muṭaʿ* manuscript in a private collection in Kuwait, which occasionally allows a dozen to fifteen pages to elapse without a picture though usually only three folios or fewer separate the pictures; the unclassified *Furūsiyya* ms., dated 767/1366, in The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, where the gap is usually two or three folios but can sometimes be as wide as ten; and the Oxford *Maqāmāt*, dated 738/1337, Bodleian Library, Marsh 458, where there are two substantial gaps of fourteen to sixteen folios between illustrations otherwise never more



- than six folios apart—all have illustrations at irregular intervals (see Haldane, *Mamluk Painting*, pp. 59, 43, 83, respectively). In the *Kiṭāb al-Ḥayawān*, while the pictures normally follow one another on successive folios or with a gap of one folio, there are also gaps of eight, seven (twice), twelve, and twenty-three folios. These gaps are only partly due to the fact that the manuscript has been rebound in some disorder. Cf. Löfgren, "Ambrosian," p. 16. In the case of the *Maqāmāt* genre, the rate of illustration can be plotted from Appendix 2 in O. Graber, *The Illustrations of the Maqamat*, Chicago and London, 1984, pp. 161–65.
15. Such as the early thirteenth-century manuscripts of the *Kiṭāb al-Aghānī* or that of the *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafā*, dated 686/1287 (Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, plates on pp. 58, 65, 98–99, 101). Such choice manuscripts with deliberately few illustrations are much more common in the Byzantine than in the Islamic tradition. This may reflect the perennial Islamic desire for lavish rather than sparse decoration.
  16. The distribution of pictures in the *Kiṭāb al-Ḥayawān* is as follows: ff. 1–10 have eleven pictures; ff. 11–20 have three; ff. 21–30 have seven; ff. 31–39 have one; ff. 40–50 have six; ff. 51–60 have one; and ff. 61–64 have three. Thus, of the three heavily illustrated areas the first, ff. 1–10, has easily the most pictures. In the case of the Pierpont Morgan Bestiary (Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, Ms. 500), the same trait can be seen taken to excess, for the first eleven folios of that manuscript contain the pictures that are generally considered the finest. In the small *Shāhnāma* manuscripts customarily dated in the early fourteenth century it seems to have been a standard operating procedure to place the miniatures three pages apart. See M. S. Simpson, *The Illustration of an Epic: The Earliest Shahnama Manuscripts*, New York, 1979, pp. 250–51.
  17. For a representative list of headings, see Pellat, *Life*, pp. viii–ix.
  18. For example, Löfgren, "Ambrosian," p. 31.
  19. Among the illustrated versions of this text, the undoubted masterpiece is the Persian translation produced in Marāgha in the 690s/1290s (Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, Ms. 500). The manuscript contains two dates. One clearly reads 690/1291, but in the other date, while there is no doubt about the tens, the letters that give the unit are illegibly blurred. This manuscript is mentioned in most of the handbooks on Persian painting but is still largely unpublished. The earliest account of it to appear in print was that of A. Yohannan, "A Manuscript of the Manāfiʿ al-Ḥayawān in the Library of Mr. J. P. Morgan," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, v. 36, 1917, pp. 381–89. For the related manuscripts, see R. Ettinghausen, *Studies in Muslim Iconography I: The Unicorn*, Washington, 1950, p. 163. Particularly important are the illustrated leaves from a dispersed manuscript of the *Manāfiʿ al-Ḥayawān* datable to ca. 1300. In a bibliographical *tour de force*, E. J. Grube has assembled the extremely scattered literature on these individual leaves; see his *Persian Painting in the Fourteenth Century: A Research Report, Supplemento n. 17 agli Annali dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli*, v. 38, no. 4, 1978, p. 12. This work is perhaps the one indispensable guide to this complex period, and it contains the fullest discussion yet published of the Morgan Bestiary, pp. 5–11. To Grube's references for the leaves of the dispersed manuscript may be added Sotheby & Co., *Catalogue of Highly Important Oriental Manuscripts and Miniatures: The Property of the Kevorkian Foundation*, 7 April 1975, p. 9, no. 17, and 12 April 1976, p. 8, no. 11, with further references; M. L. Swietochowski, "Persian Painting," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, v. 36, no. 2, 1978, pp. 6–7; E. J. Grube, in *Islamic Painting*, ed. Robinson, p. 133 and pl. 13 (lot no. 17 of the Sotheby sale of 7 April 1975).
  20. See P. P. Soucek, "An Illustrated Manuscript of al-Bīrūnī's *Chronology of Ancient Nations*" in P. J. Chelkowski, ed., *The Scholar and the Saint*, New York, 1975, pp. 103–68.
  21. For general treatments of the two major manuscripts of this text, see D. Talbot Rice, *The Illustrations to the "World History" of Rashīd al-Dīn*, ed. B. Gray, Edinburgh, 1976, and B. Gray, *The World History of Rashīd al-Dīn: A Study of the Royal Asiatic Society Manuscript*, London, 1978. For a discussion of the related manuscript in Istanbul see G. Inal, "Artistic Relationship between the Far and the Near East as Reflected in the Miniatures of the Ğamiʿ at-Tawārīḥ . . .," *Kunst des Orients*, v. 10, no. 1–2, 1976, pp. 115–20, 122–40, and Gray, *World History*, p. 18; for related leaves in the same museum, in the album H.2153, see B. Karamağaralı, "Camii't-tevāriḥ'in bilinmeyen bir nüshasına âit dört minyatür," *Sanat Tarihi Yıllığı*, v. 2, 1966–68, pp. 70–80 and German text on pp. 81–86. Finally, there are the similar leaves in the Berlin albums: M. S. İpşiroğlu, *Saray-Alben. Diez'sche Klebebände aus den Berliner Sammlungen*, Wiesbaden, 1964, pp. 15–32.
  22. The whole problem of the earliest illustrated *Shāhnāmas* has now been tackled by Simpson, *Illustration*.
  23. B. Gölpınarlı and A. Süheyl Ünver, *Tansuknamei İlhan der fūnun-u ulūm-u hatai mukaddimesi*, Istanbul, 1939.
  24. R. Ettinghausen, "On Some Mongol Miniatures," *Kunst des Orients*, v. 3, 1959, pp. 44–52 and figs. 1–2.
  25. Simpson, *Illustration*, pp. 273–80, 283–87, 290, 292–97, 299–301, 303–8 and pls. 109–12; M. S. Simpson, "The Role of Bagdād in the Formation of Persian Painting," in *Art et Société dans le Monde iranien*, ed. C. Adle, Paris, 1982, esp. pp. 94–106.
  26. B. W. Robinson, *Persian Paintings in the India Office Library*, London, 1976, pp. 3–10.
  27. Mirza Muhammad Qazvini, "An Account of the Muʾnisu l-Ahrār: A Rare Persian Manuscript Belonging to Mr. H. Kevorkian," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, v. 5, 1928–30, pp. 97–108; E. J. Grube, *Muslim Miniature Painting*, Venice, 1962, pp. 39–42 and pls. 30–31; B. W. Robinson, *The Kevorkian Collection: Islamic and Indian Illustrated Manuscripts, Miniature Paintings and Drawings*, unpublished report prepared for the Trustees of the Kevorkian Foundation at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1953, p. 13.
  28. The most innovative manuscripts in this respect were the *Shāhnāma*, al-Bīrūnī's *al-Āthār al-Baqīya*, and the *Ĵamiʿ al-Tawārīkh* by Rashīd al-Dīn.
  29. Examples are the *Furūsiyya* and *Automata* texts.
  30. This is true not only within a single manuscript (e.g., the selection of battle scenes in the Edinburgh Rashīd al-Dīn manuscript, Rice, *Illustrations*, pls. 38–41, 43–44, 48–49, 51, 53–61) but also from one manuscript to another. Compare

- the battle scenes from the Rashīd al-Dīn manuscript with typical ones from the various illustrated *Shāhnāmas* (Simpson, *Illustration*, pls. 55 and 67; 56, 68, and 72; 97 and 98) or with the depiction of a siege on f. 93b of the Bīrūnī manuscript (color plate in D. Barrett, *Persian Painting of the Fourteenth Century*, London, 1952, pl. 1).
31. The generalizations expressed in n. 30 apply with still greater force in this case. Even sparsely illustrated manuscripts, such as the *Taʾrīkh-i Jahān Gushā* or the *Marzubānnāma*, manage to find room for an enthronement scene.
  32. The illustrations depict a total of twenty-three people, thirty animals, twenty-three birds, and twelve fish.
  33. Namely, those on ff. 18a, 19b, 20b, 25a, 26a, 29a, 36a, 40b, 41a, 63b.
  34. E.g., f. 36a, showing an Umayyad governor reading a message; or f. 40b, showing a domestic interior with three women, illustrating a single sentence in the text: "A woman complained about her husband and told of his ignorance in intercourse with women." For these scenes, see Löfgren, "Ambrosian," p. 26 and pls. I and II, respectively.
  35. F. R. Martin, *The Miniature Paintings and Painters of Persia, India and Turkey*, London, 1912, pls. 21 (below), 22 (below), and 24 (above).
  36. Especially audience and court scenes.
  37. E. Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History of the Near East in the Middle Ages*, London, 1976, p. 291 and, for an analysis of the changed situation in the fifteenth century, p. 324. This lavish use of gold is therefore another reason for dating the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* ms. to the fourteenth century rather than later.
  38. Far too little attention has been paid to this important manuscript of the *Manāfiʿ al-Ḥayawān* (*The Usefulness of Animals*) by Ibn al-Durāhim al-Maṣūlī. The major study of its paintings so far is now somewhat outdated: E. de Lorey, "Le Bestiaire de l'Escorial," *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 6<sup>e</sup> série, v. 14, 1935, pp. 228-38. See also Haldane, *Mamluk Painting*, pp. 50-51 and n. 1 above.
  39. No specialized study of this manuscript has yet been published, though its place *vis-à-vis* other contemporary versions of the text has been established; see M. S. Walzer, "The Mamlūk Illuminated Manuscripts of Kalīla wa-Dimna," in R. Ettinghausen, ed., *Aus der Welt der islamischen Kunst. Festschrift für Ernst Kühnel zum 75. Geburtstag am 26.10.1957*, Berlin, 1959, pp. 195-206.
  40. These paintings are substantially unpublished; the stray references are gathered in Haldane, *Mamluk Painting*, p. 64. Of the manuscripts in this second category, the Bodleian *Kalīla wa-Dimna* is certainly the closest to the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*: the pictures are of about the same size and other similarities include the use of a plain ground and a high standard of animal drawing. See the study by Esin Atıl referred to in n. 1 above.
  41. E.g., the celebrated luster dish depicting a cock-fight, E. J. Grube, *Islamic Pottery of the Eighth to the Fifteenth Century in the Keir Collection*, London, 1976, pp. 138-41 and color plate opposite p. 136.
  42. Color plate in R. Ettinghausen *et al.*, *Islamic Art, Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, N.S. 33, Spring 1975, tenth unnumbered page. The fullest development of this mode of ceramic decoration was reached in fifteenth-century Valencia; see anon., "Valencian Lusterware of the Fifteenth Century: An Exhibition at The Cloisters," *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, N.S. 29, no. 1, 1970, pp. 25, 29-32, and color photographs on front and back covers. See also G. Scavizzi, *Maioliche dell'Islam e del Medioevo occidentale*, Milan, 1966, pls. 41-42, 44-45, 47.
  43. A. Lane, *Early Islamic Pottery*, London, 1947, pls. 28B, 29B, 79B.
  44. E. Aul, *Art of the Arab World*, Washington, 1975, pp. 76-77.
  45. Perhaps the narrative element found quite frequently in Saljūq times in luster and *mānāʿī* pottery and in luster tile-work facilitated artistic interchange with book painting. For typical examples, see A. U. Pope and P. Ackerman, eds., *A Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present*, London and New York, 1939, pls. 642, 660, 664, 672, 674-75, 686-89, 703A, 706-9. For related book painting, see A. S. Melikian Chirvani, *Le Roman de Varqe et Gošāh, Arts Asiatiques*, v. 22 (numéro spécial), Paris, 1970, figs. 1-65. The subject warrants more detailed attention than it has so far received.
  46. The best convenient survey is to be found in Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, pp. 104-24.
  47. Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, pls. on pp. 116-17, 119.
  48. See H. Buchthal, "Early Islamic Miniatures from Baghdad," *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, v. 5, 1942, pp. 21-22, 27, 30. For the best group of illustrations in color, see Aul, *Art*, pp. 53-60, especially 59, with bibliography. This was the principal but not the only illustrated work of this kind; in the twelfth century Maṣṣūr al-Sūrī wrote a work on botany and commissioned a painter to accompany him on his field trips and to paint the plants in color at the different stages of their growth. See A. Mohiuddin, "Muslim Contribution to Biology," *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Islam and Science*, Islamabad, 1981, p. 92.
  49. E. Wellesz, "An Early Al-Ṣūfī Manuscript in the Bodleian Library in Oxford: A Study in Islamic Constellation Images," *Ars Orientalis*, v. 3, 1959, figs. 18, 19, 26-34.
  50. For illustrations from the manuscripts in Vienna and Paris, see B. Farès, *Le Livre de la Thériaque*, Cairo, 1953, second unnumbered color plate, figs. 9-10 and pls. XIII-XV.
  51. For the famous illustrated version of this text in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, see H. Omont, *Miniatures des plus anciens manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, 1929, pp. 34-40 and pls. LXV-LXXII. The manuscript is undated but is commonly attributed to the tenth century.
  52. Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, pp. 97, 100. Cf. also n. 84 below.
  53. The paintings of this manuscript, which are probably of thirteenth-century date, remain virtually unpublished. See K. Holter, "Die islamischen Miniaturhandschriften vor 1350,"



- Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, v. 54, no. 1–2, 1937, p. 14; H. Buchthal, O. Kurz, and R. Ettinghausen, "Supplementary Notes to K. Holter's Check List of Islamic Illuminated Manuscripts before A.D. 1350," *Ars Islamica*, v. 7, 1940, p. 53; and Buchthal, "Early Islamic Miniatures," pp. 34–37, 39.
54. Perhaps the finest thirteenth-century version is that in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, C. arab. 464 (Aumer 616), which is dated 678/1280 (color illustrations most easily accessible in Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, pp. 138–39). An even more relevant example in the case of the Milan *Kitāb al-Hayawān* is the so-called "Sarre Qazwīnī," now divided between the Freer Gallery and the New York Public Library; see Aul, *Art*, pp. 115–31; J. A. O. Badiee, "An Islamic Cosmography: The Illustrations of the Sarre Qazwini," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, 1978. Finally, see the copies in the British Library (Ms. Or. 14140) datable to the early fourteenth century; the slightly later copy in Gotha (ca. 1330–40; Forschungsbibliothek, Ms. A1506); and the fragmentary copy recently sold at Sotheby's in London, convincingly dated to the early fourteenth century and attributed to a Mamlūk painter. (For these three manuscripts, see S. Carboni and A. Contadini, "An Illustrated Copy of al-Qazwīnī's *The Wonders of Creation*," in *Sotheby's Art at Auction*, London, 1990, pp. 228–33; for their comments on the Ambrosiana manuscript, see pp. 232–33.) For an attribution of the fragmentary copy to the third quarter of the thirteenth century and to Syria, see *Sotheby's Oriental Manuscripts and Miniatures*, 26 April 1990, London, 1990, Lot 182, pp. 112–20.
  55. See the studies by Aul and von Bothmer mentioned in n. 1 above. For treatments of other relevant illustrated versions of this text see: M. S. Walzer, "Mamlūk Illuminated"; M. S. Walzer, "An Illustrated Leaf from a Lost Mamlūk Kalīlah wa-Dimnah Manuscript," *Ars Orientalis*, v. 2, 1957, pp. 503–5; H. Buchthal, "'Hellenistic' Miniatures in Early Islamic Manuscripts," *Ars Islamica*, v. 7, 1940, pp. 128–33 and figs. 27, 33, 42, 44, 46; P. Waley and N. Titley, "An Illustrated Persian Text of Kalīlah and Dimna Dated 707/1307–8," *The British Library Journal*, v. 1, no. 1, 1975, pp. 42–61; J. M. Rogers, F. Çağman, and Z. Tanındı, *The Topkapı Sarayı Museum: The Albums and Illustrated Manuscripts*, London, 1986, pp. 47–48, 50–51; J. S. Cowen, "Drama and Morality in Two Early Mongol Illustrated Sequences from *Kalīlah wa Dimna*," *Oriental Art*, N.S. 30, no. 2, 1984, pp. 167–77; J. S. Cowen, *Kalīlah wa Dimna. An Animal Allegory of the Mongol Court: The Istanbul University Album*, New York, 1989. See also n. 98 below.
  56. Such conventions might, of course, be much older than the thirteenth century and might have originated elsewhere than in Mesopotamia. For the purposes of the present argument, however, the salient fact is that they did exist in mature form in thirteenth-century Mesopotamian book painting and are thus the most obvious source that can be postulated for similar Mamlūk painting.
  57. The case made by Sofie Walzer, "Mamlūk Illuminated," *passim*, is irrefutable.
  58. K. Weitzmann, *Late Antique and Early Christian Book Illumination*, London, 1977, fig. VI and pls. 18–19.
  59. E.g., that of Sulṭān Baibars; see L. A. Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, Oxford, 1933, pp. 9, 106–10, and pl. 1.
  60. For typical examples see Haldane, *Mamluk Painting*, pls. 50, 59–63.
  61. The manuscript is in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (Ms. grec Suppl. 247) and may date from the tenth or eleventh century. For a color illustration, see A. Grabar, *Byzantium: Byzantine Art in the Middle Ages*, tr. B. Forster, London, 1966, p. 150, pl. 8.
  62. Aul, *Art*, p. 54; Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, pp. 72–73.
  63. This is the bird perching in a "tree" on f. 26a, Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pl. VI.
  64. O. Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration*, London, 1948, p. 8.
  65. Features in this manuscript with an arguably Byzantine ancestry include: knotted curtains, haloes, serried ranks of figures, bolsters, drapery conventions, fantasy architecture, and so on. But it seems likely that many stages of transmission cannot be plotted with precision because of the lack of relevant dated manuscripts.
  66. H. Buchthal, "The Painting of the Syrian Jacobites in Its Relation to Byzantine and Islamic Art," *Syria*, v. 20, 1939, pp. 136–50; G. de Jerphanion, *Les Miniatures du Manuscrit Syriac No. 559 de la Bibliothèque Vaticane*, Vatican City, 1940; J. Leroy, *Les manuscrits syriaques à peintures conservés dans les bibliothèques d'Europe et d'Orient*, Paris, 1964.
  67. This is especially true of the tendency to cluster the figures in tightly knit groups; for parallels in paintings of the Baghdad school, see D. James, "Space-forms in the Work of the Baghdad *Maqāmāt* Illustrators, 1225–58," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, v. 37, no. 2, 1974, fig. 1 (cf. p. 315) and Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, pp. 118–19.
  68. It is found in the earliest Byzantine manuscripts, such as the purple codices; see Weitzmann, *Late Antique*, pp. 24–33.
  69. Exactly the same characteristics can be traced in the principal Mamlūk *furūsiyya* manuscripts, especially those in London, Dublin, Paris, and Istanbul. For a useful general discussion of these manuscripts, with detailed bibliographical references, see Grube in *Islamic Painting*, ed. Robinson, pp. 115–17.
  70. Folios 64a and 42a respectively, corresponding to Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pls. XXIII and IV.
  71. Found on folios 23a, 29a, 44b, and 63b; see Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pls. XIb, VII, Va, XXII.
  72. This is most tellingly shown by their use in a picture showing three fishes (folio 28b, corresponding to Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pl. XXb); apparently the artist did not trouble to reflect whether such plants were appropriate in an aquatic scene.
  73. Folio 8a; see Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pl. XIV.
  74. Folios 40b and 18a respectively, corresponding to Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pls. II and VIII.
  75. Notably in oliphants; see E. Kühnel, *Die islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen*, Berlin, 1971. For metalwork, see D. Barrett, *Islamic Metalwork in the British Museum*, London, 1949, p. 32.
  76. J. M. C. Toynbee and J. B. Ward-Perkins, "Peopled Scrolls: A

- Hellenistic Motif in Imperial Art," *Papers of the British School at Rome*, v. 18, 1950, pp. 2–43; C. M. Dauphin, "Inhabited Scrolls from the IVth to the VIIth Century A.D. in Asia Minor and the Eastern Provinces of the Byzantine Empire," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1974.
77. E.g., f. 29a; see Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pl. VII.
  78. E.g., f. 36a; see Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pl. I.
  79. This is true of the enthronement scenes in both folios 25a and 36a; see Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pls. XIII and I.
  80. E.g., folios 19b, 20b, and 40b; see Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pls. IX, X, and II.
  81. E.g., folios 18a and 20b; see Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pls. VIII and X.
  82. This is the cat on f. 9a; see Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pl. XVb, lower picture. The ostrich on f. 10a should perhaps also be mentioned here; see color plate in Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, p. 157.
  83. An opportunity taken by the artists of two comparable Mamlūk manuscripts—the *Kashf al-Asrār* in Istanbul (Süleymaniye Library, Lala Ismail 565) and the Escorial Bestiary (Cod. arab. num. 898); see Haldane, *Mamluk Painting*, pp. 50–54.
  84. These number five in all—folios 9a (upper picture), 42a, 44b (upper picture), 44b (lower picture), and 64a; see Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pls. XVa, IV, Va, Vb, and XXIII. This theme occurs much more rarely in other comparable manuscripts. For example, among the thirty-nine pictures of the *Kitāb al-Baiṭara* of 605/1209 produced in Baghdad (Cairo, National Library, Cod. med. VIII), it occurs only once (on f. 157) while among the fifty-six pictures of the same text in the Topkapı Sarayı Library in Istanbul (Cod. coll. Ahmet III, no. 2115) it does not occur even once. The omission is remarkable given the variety of equine poses that occur in the manuscript; by the same token, its frequent presence in the *Jāhiz* manuscript, where no animal is allowed very many illustrations, is all the more exceptional. For a discussion of the versions of the *Kitāb al-Baiṭara*, see E. J. Grube, "The Hippiatrica Arabica Illustrata: Three 13th Century Manuscripts and Related Material," in Pope and Ackerman, eds., *Survey*, v. 14, pp. 3138–55.
  85. Folios 5a, 9a (upper picture), 18a, 19b, 20b, 36a, 40a, 40b, 41a, 42a, 44b (upper), 44b (lower), and 64a; see Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pls. XIXa, XVa, VIII, IX, X, I, XXIVa, II, III, IV, Va, Vb, and XXIII.
  86. Löfgren, "Ambrosian," p. 26 and pl. I.
  87. See G. Jacob, *Geschichte des Schattentheaters im Morgenland und Abendland*, Hanover, 1925; P. Kahle, "Islamische Schattenspielfiguren aus Ägypten," *Der Islam*, v. 1, 1910, pp. 264–99, and v. 2, 1911, pp. 145–95; P. Kahle, "Das arabische Schattentheater im mittelalterlichen Ägypten," *Wissenschaftliche Annalen*, v. 3, 1954, pp. 748–76. Further links with the shadow theatre may be the deliberately plain background, like a screen against which the simplified image is projected; the use of stagey pictorial devices like plants or trees flanking the central image; and, in the case of many animals, the selection of a pose that in the simplest and most economical way denotes movement.
  88. Folios 6a, 29a, and 51a; see Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pls. XXa, VII, and XXIVb.
  89. Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pp. 15, 17, 19, 25.
  90. This section would have begun just after the present f. 50 (f. 40 in the original text), but unfortunately the next nine folios are missing; see Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pp. 19, 25. This is entitled *bāb ākhir fī l-kalb washana*; see Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pp. 14–15. A third section of the text bears the only superscription in the whole manuscript; this reads, "description of the symptoms of the sagacity of dogs," yet in what follows there are, amidst two lacunae, pictures of an eagle, a snake, a eunuch, birds, and two elephants—but no dog.
  91. The artist often uses the presence of two animals in a composition as a means of variegating his palette; this is especially true in mating scenes.
  92. For color plates see C. Anet, "The Manafi-i-Heiwan-II," *Burlington Magazine*, v. 23, 1913, p. 261 and pl. IV; Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, p. 134; B. Gray, *Persian Painting*, Geneva, 1961, pp. 20–21; D. Stewart, *Early Islam*, Weert, 1967, pp. 131–39; E. Kühnel, *Persische Miniaturmalerei*, Berlin, 1959, pl. I; and E. J. Grube, *The World of Islam*, Feltham, 1967, pls. 35–36. For a representative series of black-and-white plates, see Martin, *Miniature Painters*, pls. 21–26. The material on this manuscript assembled for publication by Rudolf Riefstahl has never appeared in print.
  93. For the transmission of such manuscripts to the Islamic world, see K. Weitzmann, "The Greek Sources of Islamic Scientific Illustrations," in G. C. Miles, ed., *Archaeologia Orientalia in Memoriam Ernst Herzfeld*, Locust Valley, 1952, pp. 244–66. This article has been reprinted with updated footnotes in H. L. Kessler, ed., *Kurt Weitzmann: Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination*, Chicago, 1971, pp. 20–44.
  94. Color illustration in Grube, *World*, pl. 35.
  95. Color illustration in Kühnel, *Persische*, pl. 1. There is no doubt as to the identification of this scene, and its location so close to the previous picture goes far to justify the identification of that scene as Adam and Eve, and thus related to a Genesis cycle, instead of merely "man and woman."
  96. T. W. Arnold, *The Old and New Testaments in Muslim Religious Art*, London, 1932, pp. 14–16, 21–22, 24, 28, 31–32, 35–36, and pls. III–V, XII–XIII, and XVI.
  97. B. Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, Berlin, 1955, pp. 198–224, 245–49.
  98. M. S. Dimand, *Persian Miniatures*, Milan, n.d., pp. 5, 14, and pl. III. The same drapery convention is used on the Cain and Abel miniature in the same manuscript (n. 95 above) and, with notable success, to indicate the loose folds of skin on the elephants; see Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, p. 134. Although this detail is probably a decorative cliché, it is conceivable that the artist was familiar with the texture of elephant skin or copied a model that embodied such knowledge. India is a



- tempting source, the more so as it is known that an Indian Buddhist, Kamalashri Bakhshi, was employed to help with the Indian section of Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*; see K. Jahn, *Rashīd al-Dīn's History of India*, The Hague, 1965, p. xxxii. In the context of Indian influences in this bestiary, note also that the only other popular text in the Islamic world with numerous animal depictions, the *Kalīla wa Dimna*, was based on the Indian *Panchatantra*, which was illustrated in various media in medieval India; see H. Buchthal, "Indian Fables in Islamic Art," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1941, pp. 317, 323–24. For further Indian connections, cf. J. Raby, "Between Sogdia and the Mamluks: A Note on the Earliest Illustrations to *Kalīla Wa Dimna*," *Oriental Art*, v. 33, no. 4, 1987, pp. 381–98.
99. Barrett, *Persian Painting*, pl. 1. The manuscript uses elaborate Kūfic calligraphy, often in red ink, for chapter headings throughout most of the text.
100. Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, p. 134.
101. Such as the anklets worn by both animals, a feature that recurs in the image of the giraffe in the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, f. 26a; see Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pl. VI. Could this have been regarded as the appropriate ornament for these especially exotic creatures? The motif occurs elsewhere in Mamlūk painting but only rarely; in the Pierpont Morgan Bestiary, in an image where Indian influence has been postulated (see n. 98 above), the same anklets are worn by Eve. An elephant very similar to the ones depicted here—violet in color and complete with anklets and cap—occurs in a picture datable ca. 1300 in an album in the Topkapı Sarayı in Istanbul (H. 2152, F60b); see E. Esin, "A Pair of Miniatures from the Miscellany Collections of Topkapı," *Central Asiatic Journal*, v. 21, 1977, pls. 1b, 11b. Esin associates the images of this picture with Buddhist iconography (p. 16). For a color plate, see M. S. Ipşiroğlu, *Das Bild im Islam*, Vienna and Munich, 1971, pl. 24.
102. Stewart, *Early Islam*, p. 134.
103. Löfgren, "Ambrosian," p. 32.
104. The illustration shows a somewhat glum elephant bent double under the weight of a gigantic howdah crammed with military men, and being led most literally by the nose (Harley MS. 4751, f. 8). See A. Payne, *Medieval Bestiaries*, London, n.d., p. 6; cf. also the bestiary in the Westminster Chapter House Library, MS. 22, f. 20b, mentioned in B. Rowland, *Animals with Human Faces*, London, 1974, p. 72.
105. White, *The Bestiary*, p. 24.
106. White, *The Bestiary*, p. 25.
107. A far more formidable creature is conjured up by the artist of the *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, dated 678/1280. This shows a convincingly authentic roc carrying off Sindbād; see Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, p. 139.
108. Stewart, *Early Islam*, p. 131.
109. This very quality irritated a later reader of the manuscript, who scrawled on the margin of this page, "Thou foolish son of a burned father, if nobody has seen the Sīmurgh then how didst thou portray it?" (Yohannan, "A Manuscript," p. 389, slightly adapted).
110. These birds constitute perhaps the most formulaic element of these paintings, for they are invariably disposed in groups of three and colored in red and yellow or related colors. In the early part of the manuscript, which is the section with illustrations in a style akin to Mesopotamian painting, every painting has at least one group of three such birds.
111. In the later part of the manuscript very small square pictures involving lesser creatures like monkeys, birds, crustaceans, and fish take over from the earlier, more ambitious paintings of large mammals.
112. The treatment of the giraffe, for example, makes an interesting contrast with the same subject in the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* (f. 26a; see Löfgren, "Ambrosian," pl. VI). In the Morgan Bestiary the artist exploits the size of the giraffe by making its head break through the margin; the artist of the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* keeps it confined within the frame.
113. Stewart, *Early Islam*, p. 138.
114. White, *The Bestiary*, pp. 29–30. This section of the text is not derived from the *Physiologus*, the Greek source on which the Latin bestiary is ultimately based; see M. R. James, *The Bestiary*, p. 2. Could this information, then, which only entered the mainstream of the Latin bestiary tradition in the twelfth century (White, *The Bestiary*, p. 238), derive from an oriental source? But James notes that relevant texts other than the *Physiologus* were available in twelfth-century Britain: Isidore's *Etymologiae*, Solinus' *Liber Memorabilium*, the *Hexameron* of Ambrose, and probably others (*The Bestiary*, p. 28).
115. E.g., the treatment of lions as a tender family group; compare the scene of the animals nuzzling each other in Gray, *Persian Painting*, p. 20, with that of lions and their young in a twelfth-century bestiary in the British Library, Royal MS. 12 C XIX, f. 6 (see Payne, *Medieval Bestiaries*, pp. 4–5), which can be explained by the statement in the text that lion cubs are born dead and remain so for three days—"until their father, coming on the third day, breathes in their faces and makes them alive" (White, *The Bestiary*, p. 8).
116. I am very grateful to my friend John Higgitt for much helpful advice on Western bestiaries in general. For a brief survey, see McCulloch, *Medieval Latin*, pp. 70–77.
117. E.g., White, *The Bestiary*, p. 41 and *passim*; *Physiologus*, tr. Curley, pp. xxii–xxvi; and B. Rowland, *Birds with Human Souls: A Guide to Bird Symbolism*, Knoxville, 1978, *passim*.
118. Rowland, *Birds*, pp. 22–24 (griffin), p. 33 (bonnacon), pp. 43–44 (monoceros), pp. 51–52 (manticora), and pp. 52–53 (parandrus).
119. "The flesh of a wolf, beaten in a mortar, and cooked in the juice of celery and honey, then mixed with saffron, galangale and white pepper, a little bit of each, and taken with the juice of mouse ear is good for fever. . . . The brain of a female camel, dried and liquified with vinegar is good for epilepsy resulting from melancholia. The hump of a camel, taken internally, is good for dysentery; and the milk is useful for dropsy and for trouble of the liver and spleen. The shin bone, pounded small

and with an admixture of water, exterminates mice when placed in their holes; the melted marrow, taken with date wine four times, will help epilepsy and cure diphtheria; the saliva, in vinegar, is given to an insane man who is as violent as an infuriated camel" (Stewart, *Early Islam*, pp. 132, 137).

120. Pellat, *Life*, pp. 146, 175, 182–84.

121. E.g., Martin, *Miniature Painters*, pl. 26, top left.

122. Gray, *Persian Painting*, p. 21.

123. Cf. the illustration in Haldane, *Mamluk Painting*, p. 59, pl. 17. The artist repeats this schema almost exactly in at least one other miniature from this manuscript, a leaf now in the Freer Gallery, Washington; see Atul, *Art*, p. 113.

124. It is of course impossible to be certain about the range of Chinese paintings and related work available to ʿIlkhānīd painters. If, for example, they had access only to provincial rather than metropolitan Chinese models, or encountered Chinese painting through the distorting mirrors provided by Central Asian temple frescoes or woodblock prints, it is little wonder that their chinoiserie should seem somewhat coarse. Cf. W. Watson, "Chinese Style in the Paintings of the Istanbul Albums," *Islamic Art*, v. 1, 1981, pp. 69–76.

125. For typical illustrations, see Gray, *Persian Painting*, pp. 46–47, and B. Spuler and J. Sourdél-Thomine, *Die Kunst des Islam*, Berlin, 1973, pl. LV.

126. This point can be demonstrated repeatedly in the case of the Demotte *Shāhnāma*.

127. This occurs as early as the Rashīd al-Dīn manuscript of 714/1314 in the depictions of the mountains of India and the sacred grove of the Buddha; see Gray, *World History*, pls. 19, 26.

128. Gray, *Persian Painting*, p. 24. Compare the image "An arhat in the forest" attributed to Fan-lung and dated to the twelfth century (Freer Gallery) illustrated in J. Cahill, *Chinese Painting*, Geneva, 1960, p. 94.

129. Ipşiroğlu, *Das Bild*, pl. 37. For a Chinese parallel dated 1244, see I. E. Lodge, "Ch'en Jung's Picture of Nine Dragons," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, v. 15, 1917.

130. O. Grabar and S. Blair, *Epic Images and Contemporary History*, Chicago, 1980, pl. 34.

131. In spirit, though not in color, it seems to have much in common with the grand landscapes of Chinese painters in the eleventh century (Cahill, *Chinese Painting*, pp. 30, 31, 33, 36; J. Cahill, *Chinese Paintings: XIth–XIVth Centuries*, London, n.d., pp. 31–32, pl. 20; W. Cohn, *Chinese Painting*, London, 1948, p. 38), in the tenth century (P. C. Swann, *Chinese Painting*, Paris, 1958, p. 56), and even—most relevantly—in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, for example "Bullock Carts in the Mountains" by Chu Jui, in which the abrupt reversals of planes echo the Demotte painting (Cohn, *Chinese Painting*, p. 143).

132. E. J. Grube, "The *Kalilah wa Dimnah* of the Istanbul University Library and the Problem of Early Jalairid Painting," *Akten des*

VII. Internationalen Kongresses für Iranische Kunst und Archäologie. München 7–10. September 1976, Berlin, 1979, p. 504.

133. Gray, *Persian Painting*, pp. 38–39.

134. Notably in a series of paintings on silk; see E. J. Grube, "Studien zur Malerei der Timuriden: 1. Zur Frühstufe von Herat," *Kunst des Orients*, v. 5, no. 1, 1968, pp. 1–23. For a color plate of one such painting (Humāy meets Humāyūn) see Pope and Ackerman, eds., *Survey*, pl. 878.

135. This is very clearly seen when the plates of Mamlūk images of the lion attacking the bull are juxtaposed with the illustration of the same subject in the Istanbul *Kalila wa Dimna*; see J. David-Weill, tr., "Sur Quelques Illustrations de Kalila et Dimna," in O. Aslanapa, ed., *Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte Asiens. In Memoriam Ernst Diez*, Istanbul, 1963, pp. 258–63 and pls. II, IV.

136. Gray, *Persian Painting*, p. 35; Ipşiroğlu, *Das Bild*, p. 50.

137. E.g., the enraged camel in the Istanbul *Kalila wa Dimna*; see Grube, "*Kalilah wa Dimnah*," fig. 3.

138. Cahill, *Chinese Painting*, pp. 71–73, 77, 97, 100; cf. also the picture of an emaciated horse by Kung K'ai (late thirteenth century) in a private collection in Japan, or the animal studies of Chao Mêng-fu (1254–1322) in the Freer Gallery (Cohn, *Chinese Painting*, pls. 134–36).

139. This was an achievement that still eluded the painter of the *Kalila wa Dimna* of 744/1343–44 in the National Library, Cairo; see E. Kühnel, "A Bidpai Manuscript of 1343/4 (744 H.) in Cairo," *Bulletin of the American Institute for Iranian Art and Archaeology*, v. 5, no. 2, 1937, figs. 1–2. Even if, as Grube suggests in "*Kalilah wa Dimnah*," p. 497, these illustrations were repainted towards the end of the fourteenth century, the basic layout of the original composition—notably the balance between animals and landscape—was presumably respected.

140. Four examples of this may be seen in B. Gray, "Fourteenth-Century Illustrations of the *Kalilah and Dimnah*," *Ars Islamica*, v. 7, 1940, p. 140, fig. 7; Spuler and Sourdél-Thomine, *Die Kunst*, pl. XLVIII.

141. Gray, *Persian Painting*, p. 35; Ipşiroğlu, *Das Bild*, pls. 48–49.

142. A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, *Le bronze iranien*, Paris, 1973, pp. 80–81 and pls. on pp. 70, 72, 74; M. Meinecke, "Die mamlukischen Fayencemosaikdekorationen: eine Werkstatt aus Tabriz in Kairo (1330–1350)," *Kunst des Orients*, v. 11, no. 1–2, 1976–77, pp. 85–144.

143. The exception was once thought to have been a manuscript published by N. Atasoy: "Un manuscrit mamlūk illustré du *Shāhnāma*," *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, v. 31, 1969, pp. 151–58, pls. I–XIV. It now seems more likely, however, that this manuscript (Topkapı Sarayı, Hazine 1519) is an early Ottoman work.





Fig. 2. *Kitāb Manāfi' al-Hayawān* (the Escorial Bestiary) by Ibn al-Durailhim al-Maṣṣilī, herons, f. 80a. After Eitinghausen, *Arab Painting* p. 3.

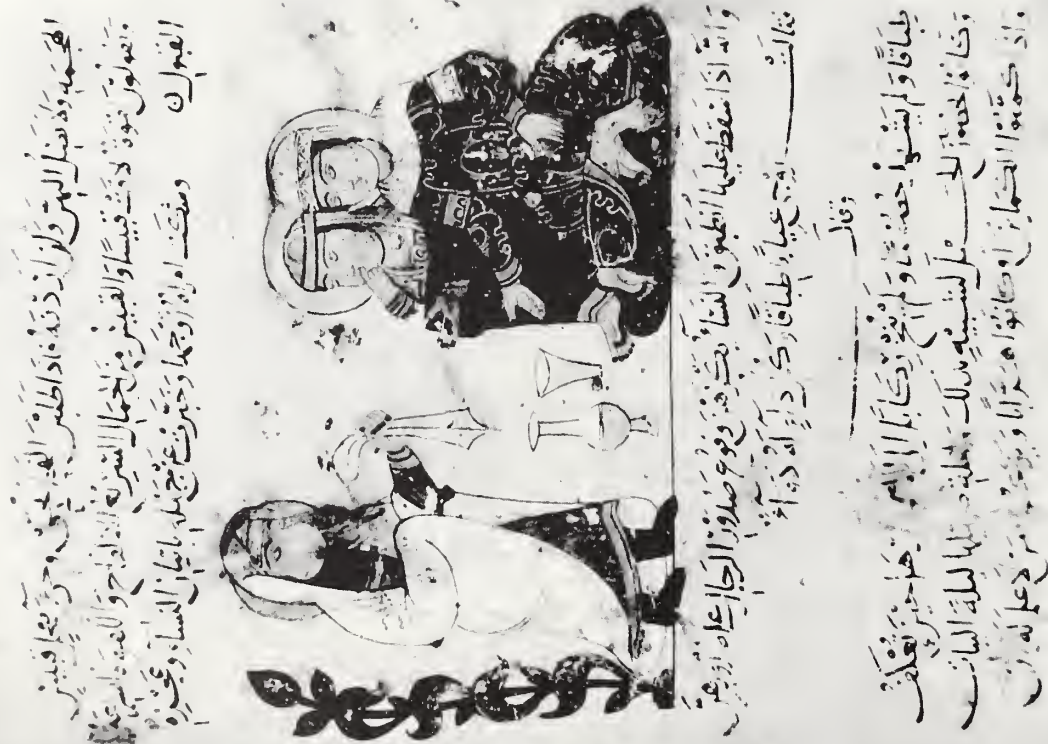


Fig. 1. *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz, harem scene, f. 40b, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.



FIG. 4. *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* by al-Jāhiz, giraffe, f. 26a, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.



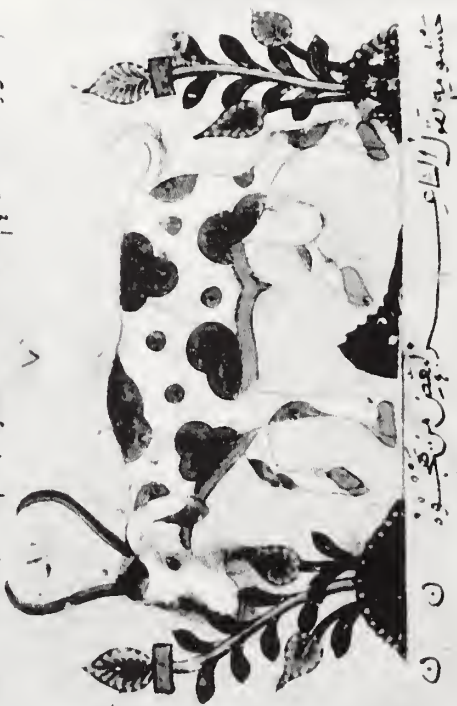
FIG. 3. *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz, ostrich, f. 10a, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.





FIG. 6. Fāṭimid luster bowl depicting an eagle, Metropolitan Museum of Art, acc. no. 63.178.1. After M. Jenkins, *Islamic Pottery: A Brief History*, New York, 1983, p. 12.

من أولئك الذين استخرجوا طيها، ذلك هو الذي يسمونه بالأنثى  
التي لا تجميع لها ولا غصن من  
الغصن فلا ذكرته ملك الأسد هذه الأنثى ذكرها وأبعد صغارها  
وأما ما ذكرتم من أن ذكر الكلب ومن استنشق البول فارق للنسب ذلك ما ليس بالخطأ  
وإنما كان في الجوف بوله فلما لم يبق فيه وإنما هي أنثى الغصن والآن لا مثيل له  
أكثر ذكرها وفي العبد الأصغر فوب وفي عجيبه النسب بوله الجاف



حسبوا به فقل الشاعر  
نزل بقبض من نخجور  
ذو غنم يركب تين لم يزد فعا ذلك الذي فتمت أراك الحميز  
وما العبد إلا الله يغفل له عليه ومقدري في الجوف  
والاحتراف من أذلال  
اعمالهم جوارحهم في مقاديرهم يقول

FIG. 5. *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz, he-goat, f. 4a, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

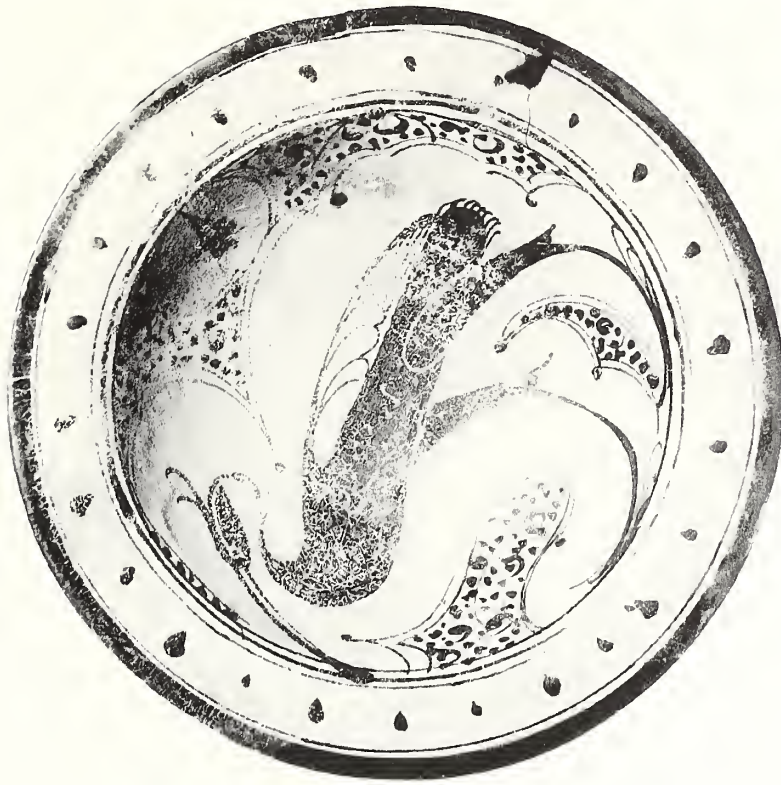


FIG. 8. Syrian bowl, ca. 1200, depicting a heron, Freer Gallery of Art, acc. no. 47.8.  
After Aul, *Art*, p. 76.



FIG. 7. *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz, eagle and snake, snake and chicken, f. 63a,  
Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.



شمالاً وارج لندار تدفع هذه القضية وتسامى في الشاكاه اليه وحين  
 هذا الشعب الكثير والنسبه المجهود وكيف وهو لا يروى وقوة من  
 القدر الذي ليس له والاف ونادى الجهد وطيب الدرة جيب الدنيا والروح  
 التي تكسر واكثر على الوطن والآله والانساء فكل شيء لا يروى فاما خلاه القدر



وحيث هذه القضية من جهة واحدة وقد دخل اليك القدر من حيثين  
 والاول من الحماي الجمار وغير الغالة خاصة فانه مثل ما في الغمر قد مر  
 الاية فلا يفرغ من الاثر وقد استعملها في غمر طلب الولد وجملة  
 موصوع الذي اثار الولد لم يفرغ من طاب له ولا في النطقة البيرة من الاثام

Fig. 10. *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz, rooster, f. 8a, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

وذلك ان السوء عندهما القدر فتسامى بغير قوه او الضمير جلد الحسية في قضاة  
 في اثار اليهم وفي العزم خاصة يدع الحمر خصا وقد اعاد بان خضاه بعد  
 الكثير لم يفرغ من خضاه بعد استحكالم القوة عاقل طبايعه واجود الحصة  
 اما في القصر وهو الذي يسمى بالغازية في تحت بغية ذلك الله خض رطب  
 والحصى من خضوها بالبحر بعد العزم والقوة خض فواج مع ماء الخلة  
 واكثر التفاد يورث الضعف والخراب في جميع الجية ان  
 وذكر لعمري كثرة الجماع فقال ما استعملته احد الا ان ذلك في منته  
 والديك فحصى لم يركب جملة ونطس وحمل الشجر وكانت العرب



لقد خولوا الام لا ياكلوا بعضها بعدا وتسمي ما كان الجود ضاراً واكثر  
 تتلا وكان شياهاً وكان شياهاً ولم يفرغ من كلاً ومسمى الذكر كان الحق  
 للفرق وما كان يفرغ من طبايعها فمنها جعل السيد المعنى واذا كان الحمر لا  
 جعله القدر شدة شدة شدة وتكون في حديد وبغية في

Fig. 9. *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz, rooster, f. 40a, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

الاماعين على الطليق قال — أبو الجاهل قال — لم تزد العرف عن فني  
 المخطوطة — فكله النساء من جميع الاجناس والفت لا والله ما عرفت قال —  
 يا ابا الله لا يكون الخط الا في شياطين شياطين الطافه فها هم  
 الا في غير التودى الا خلاصه — هه ان تراه من عند يد وح — ان شئت  
 فاما لا لاله الا الذهب الا من ولد هه ان تراه من عند يد وح — ان شئت  
 عليها من سائر الزواجر انما زنا نساء الهند  
 واعلم ان في الدكا على قدر خطوبها في فم واعلم انها تنسجج النساء  
 على عذرائهن من الفانيه ومن يرانها على عذرائهن في الهند وانما ان مدينا  
 من يزدني زناها وتحت ما معر فها صورة عند الزنا في الحظ عند  
 المتحقات



Fig. 12. *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz, f. 28b, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

لا تستطاع اكله الا تخشى ولا تعرف لغرب السحاب — ويوم علم شهر  
 السبع لا يطيف ساجا ولا مستغورا ولا يوكا كيا با ولا خا وطبعها ونزول  
 بكليه الادب لانه  
 والاصناف — التي تعصر للعزلة كثره وقد كثر الجا الى  
 من الانعام والحكر والشبوط من السحاب — ويعصر لدم الطير الذبح  
 والوحش والحماره — وقد كثر من شدة الحشمه بذلك وانما الانوف جنت  
 كثر شدة يعصر من الحيوان العبد رقة بانوق — وهو قول الشاعر  
 حتى اذا اظها لدارا والجل — لما يسهل في فتش — زوايا الانوف ونما في  
 في



ولشدة ملك الجمل لانه قال الشاعر  
 يبيت في محلات الانعام يربو ثم كانه شدة طيرانه في جحر

Fig. 11. *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz, rooster, vulture, and hoopoe, f. 6b, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.





كالشبع لم ينصف السباع شتمته ولم ينجبه ولم يعزله عن صبا  
 وقال — برضائه هو ينفق فرسا  
 كالعقاب الطيور يضر بها الطير وقانونه تحت عيشه بيان  
 وقال — سوز الذنب  
 هو شبع اذا تظير مشياه غفاب كجملها عسبان  
 يقول اذا اشتد هزب الطلوب الحار من الطاب الجاد فهو اجف الطاب  
 واذا صار كذلك فنان الطلوب جينين في معنى تحت الطاب اذا صار الزا حنا  
 ومعناه سببا لا فراط طلب العقاب  
 وقال غياث شتر الا وهو ينجبه  
 شريك الذي اخوى فل نادا بعد فوسمه ازال  
 وانما ازاله وجعله عاديا ووقفه بذلك لا بد ان الزا الذنب



Fig. 16. *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz, the *simf* (a cross of wolf and hyena), f. 22b, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

والو يربى عند الذي يربيه فينادي من الحضي الذي يربيه  
 ويعرض للحضي شتمته لا ينجبه ولا يبر عما دانت طليبه القيسيا ثم النساء فانه يبر  
 عود القيسيا اعز من دمه من النساء اكل الشيوخ المدمنين يعجز الحقيق  
 العشب والعقب الطيور وما تشبهه دله من خلوق النساء وهو من خلوق  
 القيسيا ويعزى اليه الشتمه ذلك الطعام والخل عليه والشيوخ العوام يضار  
 ذلك من خلوق القيسيا ثم النساء وقال الشاعر  
 لا انا وما قبيل اذا غدا حضي نادر ينادي زهير  
 له نساء لا تشبه لاهوته نساءه او ينجبه نساءه لا يفرق بين



Fig. 15. *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz, eunuch releases birds from cage, f. 41a, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.



ربيته وهو من العرج اعطاه والخنجر من حب سنة الاربعا  
 فقال الذي خذ من عظمه العتي حتى خذ من عظمه عتي حتى ينشرب العنبر وقال  
 عتي حتى يعقم عقمها فاد الشدة نطنة لشمس فليدرب بطة والعنبر  
 صم الفقه وانه عتي اربع عتي وانه خلا يعقب اخا عبد الله من التثنية  
 قال اراجح وصحة في وقته الا انزع يد من حسماعة واضعها في فوهة  
 وقال من دنت الدمع الزاجع في ربه كالأرجع في قبة وهذا التنازل  
 لا تملك وقال اعاد طليعا جيفة وما لعضد الكلب الجيفة العجينة الجيفة  
 الغنيس باكل العذرة ويجمع في قبة وينشغل ببوله في خوف الفه ونسبته  
 لما خشفوه وقال ضاحك الطباير كنتم انما تستعظمون الطباير وتسلطون  
 هذا المشابهة والحقة انتم من العذرة والعذرة شتر من العتي والجيفة اجبت للشراف  
 الساع فانه من العنبر الغنيس والاشد سيد السباع وهو اكل الجيفة ولا يعرض



Fig. 18. *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz, lion eating the carcass of a cow, f. 3a, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

من الكلب وطول غنقه في الخنجر واقطاعه الى طليح الديك والاشد انهم من  
 اللط والاشد مثل الكثرة مثل الربو الذي كسرة من اجهم فقال  
 هذا الساع واحذر ان خناجعة وقاية من زينة الطليح الى الماء  
 وانما مثل الربو مثل العذرة لان الدفق الذي مادام في فم ضاحكه الذي من السعد  
 واسع من الدمع واحتق معق من الماء الذي من العطن السعد والربو ضاحك  
 مالم يرايا فوضعه وسى بالدمع ضاحكه التي حرة الشدة شدة وعاد في شغل  
 الفم كان الفم والعذرة في شغل واحد واكثر الكلب فانت جنة مثل منه عني  
 ثم جمع فيه من عتي مبانته الكاين كالكاف والظفر من الاعوام من خبز تاجه  
 والشدتها والارنب



لشارحها الا انهم من الجيفة وقال ضاحك الطباير انما اعصمتموه من  
 انما العنبر فانه كالكثرة في الماء شدة المختبر لهما على الكوم لا الارنب

Fig. 17. *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz, hare, f. 5a, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

مرد لك البيت و دل طاعة سترو عجم فم نواشاعدهم  
 اني استر كات فينت له و جنيح الوط لياي طلق  
 هو سترو و صاحب بياب وهو ناش و اكل الجور و اللاتر الاله جمع شروق  
 الليل عسرة النهار ثم لا جده انا يمشي في خزانة او يطير او عرسه دار او في  
 طريق او في براري او في ظهيرة جبال او في طير او في الاوطان في الارض ايد ايتشهم  
 و تسروج و انك الارض تسقا خصبا و دونه ملانة او فخره خلفا حير صا  
 و جعد و شرها و طعما لعمري حتى لا خي ايصا يري كلبا الا شتر استه و لا يسم  
 عدها منه و لا نراه برمي بجدي قط الارض اليه فعده عليه لانه لا يصا و لا يدر الا شيئا



معاليه اليه قد استعبدوا له طبعه و عليه اجتمع على طبعه انما اراد  
 به و لا فكاك منه لذلك انه اما اراد ان يطعمه و لا يحسن انهم لذلك يتغير

FIG. 19. *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz, three dogs, f. 7a, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.



FIG. 20. *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz, a fowler, f. 63b, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.









والا ليعني  
 لا يزعجني لظنه عسبا  
 وما والي  
 فمؤنفة الشتر  
 كما شاموفا منعها  
 وما الاحسن  
 لنفسي بها التوبة لازل لا اطلب  
 وزعمته ان اول الدب من النجاسة البنية ووهو البشائر يزعج ولا يزعج اسم العبد



والا ليعني  
 لا يزعجني لظنه عسبا  
 وما والي  
 فمؤنفة الشتر  
 كما شاموفا منعها  
 وما الاحسن  
 لنفسي بها التوبة لازل لا اطلب  
 وزعمته ان اول الدب من النجاسة البنية ووهو البشائر يزعج ولا يزعج اسم العبد

Fig. 25. *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz, dogs eating the carcass of an ass, f. 1a, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

والا ليعني  
 لا يزعجني لظنه عسبا  
 وما والي  
 فمؤنفة الشتر  
 كما شاموفا منعها  
 وما الاحسن  
 لنفسي بها التوبة لازل لا اطلب  
 وزعمته ان اول الدب من النجاسة البنية ووهو البشائر يزعج ولا يزعج اسم العبد



والا ليعني  
 لا يزعجني لظنه عسبا  
 وما والي  
 فمؤنفة الشتر  
 كما شاموفا منعها  
 وما الاحسن  
 لنفسي بها التوبة لازل لا اطلب  
 وزعمته ان اول الدب من النجاسة البنية ووهو البشائر يزعج ولا يزعج اسم العبد

Fig. 26. *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz, the *daisam* (a cross of wolf and dog), f. 23a, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.







Fig. 30. *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz, *ḥaywān* scene, f. 36a, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.



Fig. 29. *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz, mating scenes between he-goat and ewe, ram and she-goat, f. 44b, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.







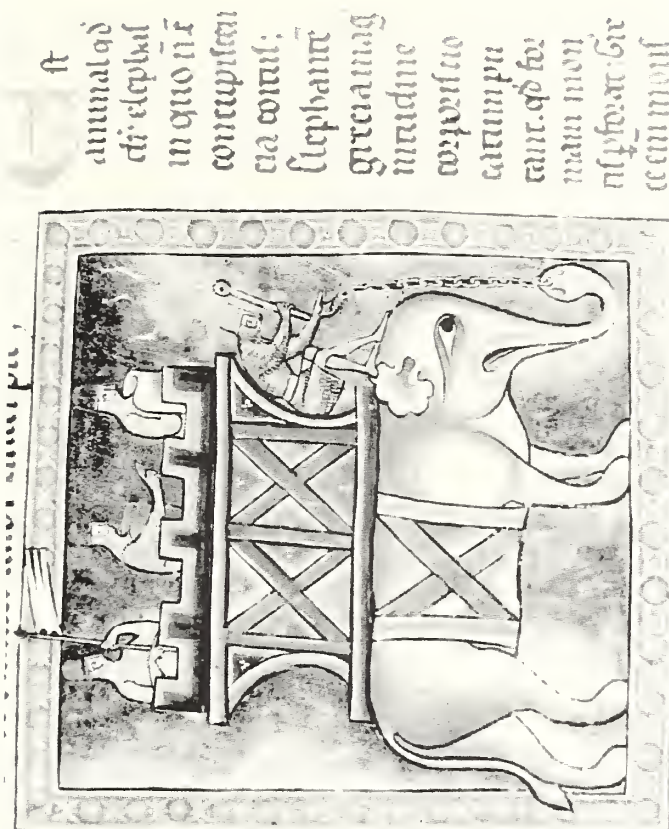


FIG. 36. Harley MS. 4751, elephant, f. 8, British Library, London.



FIG. 35. *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz, copulating elephants, f. 64a, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.





Fig. 38. *Manāḡī al-Hayawān* by Ibn Bukhārī, herdsman with animals, f. 44b.  
Courtesy of the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

و در روز نظایه عدا که از جابه از بند شده روز بدید آید و یکم از سبزه خیزد و در روز خیزد و طعمه او باشد

اند صورت سیم

سیمج اند از دار بخیزد اند از فروضا ببرد که خطا نشود و مردم با رازی و سهند و هوای خیزد



Fig. 37. *Manāḡī al-Hayawān* by Ibn Bukhārī, 'anqa, f. 55a.  
Courtesy of the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.



لَمَّا كُنْتُ بِهَذَا الْوَجْهِ  
جِئْتُ بِهَا إِلَى الْوَجْهِ  
وَأَدْرَيْتُ أَنَّهَا تَبْهِي  
بِلَيْكٍ وَفَعْلَانِمْ  
وَدَعْنَهَا دَارًا  
وَأَعْلَانِمْ وَأَعْلَانِمْ  
أَوْزَانِمْ بَرْدِمْ  
بَيْتٍ وَشَرِّمْ بَرْدِمْ  
مَانْدُ كُونِمْ بَرْدِمْ  
مَادُونِمْ بَرْدِمْ

بِجُودِ تَابِشْتَرِمْ أَنْهَ بَاجَا بَازَسُوْدُ وَبِجُودِ اِنْدَاكِجَا سُوْدُ دَرْدِشْتَرِمْ كِهْ مَادُونِمْ بَرْدِمْ  
وَبِجُودِ اِنْدَاكِجَا سُوْدُ دَرْدِشْتَرِمْ كِهْ مَادُونِمْ بَرْدِمْ

صَوْنِشْتَرِمْ

شُكْرِيْكُمْ دَانِشْتَرِمْ خَلَاكِ اِرَاوَنْدِمْ قُضْشْتَرِمْ كِهْ دَانِشْتَرِمْ اِرَاوَنْدِمْ

FIG. 39. *Marāfi' al-Hayawān* by Ibn Bukhārī, giraffe, f. 16a.  
Courtesy of the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

وَقَدْ نَسِلَ وَدَعْنَانِمْ وَبِجُودِ اِنْدَاكِجَا سُوْدُ دَرْدِشْتَرِمْ كِهْ مَادُونِمْ بَرْدِمْ  
وَبِجُودِ اِنْدَاكِجَا سُوْدُ دَرْدِشْتَرِمْ كِهْ مَادُونِمْ بَرْدِمْ

صَوْنِشْتَرِمْ

وَقَدْ نَسِلَ وَدَعْنَانِمْ وَبِجُودِ اِنْدَاكِجَا سُوْدُ دَرْدِشْتَرِمْ كِهْ مَادُونِمْ بَرْدِمْ



FIG. 40. *Marāfi' al-Hayawān* by Ibn Bukhārī, ibexes, f. 37b.  
Courtesy of the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.







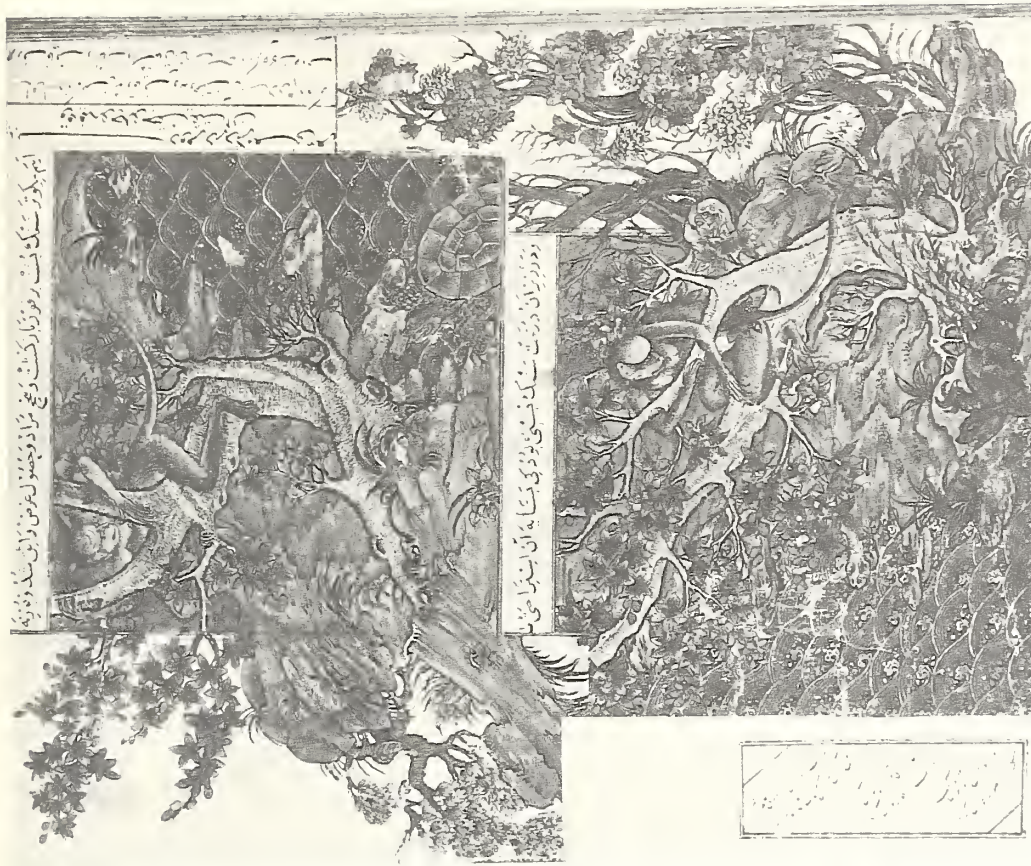


FIG. 44. *Kaḡla wa Dimna*, the deposed king of the monkeys throws figs to the tortoise, Istanbul University Library, F. 1422, f. 19b. After Gray, *Persian Painting*, p. 35.



FIG. 43. *Sulwān al-Mutaʿ*, The Tale of the Horse and the Boar, Freer Gallery of Art, acc. no. 54.IV. After Aul, *Art*, p. 113.





## ILLUMINATED HEBREW MANUSCRIPT FACSIMILES

By LEILA AVRIN

THERE IS NO COPYRIGHT ON THE WORD "FACSIMILE," AND publishers have taken the liberty of using it to denote any reproduction of a manuscript regardless of its fidelity to the original. This broad contemporary usage of the term, which at one time meant a collotype reproduction, especially affects the Hebrew manuscript facsimile market, which has burgeoned since the 1960s. Here I will first survey Hebrew manuscript facsimiles since their appearance in the late nineteenth century and then concentrate on two recent landmark publications by Facsimile Editions of London: the Kennicott Bible (2 v., 1985, v. 2 *Introduction*) and the Rothschild Miscellany (2 v., 1989, v. 2 *A Scholarly Commentary*).

The first Hebrew manuscript facsimile was the Sarajevo Haggadah, published in 1898, at a time when European scholars were just becoming aware of the existence of medieval Jewish manuscript art. The collotype facsimile was in black and white, not unusual for its day, although a few color illustrations from this and other Hebrew manuscripts appeared in the facsimile itself and in the companion volume. This haggadah (the book read at the home ceremony on the eve of Passover), written and illustrated in Catalonia in the first half of the fourteenth century, had been acquired only four years before its publication by the Bosnian National Museum in Sarajevo from a family forced by poverty to sell it. While it is not the most splendid of manuscripts of its time and genre, it is unique because of its full cycle of biblical illustrations preceding the haggadah text, commencing with the Creation and ending with the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. Also illustrated are preparations for the Passover and synagogue scenes, which may indicate a Jewish artist. No artist's colophon from Sefardi (Spanish) haggadot has come down to us to prove or disprove this theory. The companion text-volume for the Sarajevo Haggadah was written by David Heinrich Müller, a scholar of Semitic languages, and Julius von Schlosser, an art historian. Their chapters describe the Passover festival and its customs, the contents of the manuscript, and its relation to other known illustrated haggadot of both Sefardi and Ashkenazi (German) origin in European collections. A final chapter on the history of Jewish art was written by David Kaufmann, a scholar/collector of Hebrew manuscripts. Although the 1898 essays now

seem antiquated, the authors established the tradition of the scholarly commentary volume for future facsimiles. The Sarajevo Haggadah facsimile reproduced the illustrated pages only, not the text. Most of today's Hebrew facsimiles reproduce the entire text.

The next facsimile, published in Leipzig in 1927–28, was the Darmstadt Haggadah (Landesbibliothek, Darmstadt, Codex Orientalis 8), an Ashkenazi haggadah written in the middle Rhine region in the second quarter of the fifteenth century, with illustrations by a non-Jewish artist. It was a fine limited-edition collotype but with its gold leaf rendered in ink. For the companion volume several scholars contributed essays on scribal and artistic aspects of the manuscript, the book's history, and its binding. In 1971–72, Propyläen in Berlin and Ullstein in Frankfurt-am-Main published a new facsimile of the Darmstadt Haggadah, an eight-color printing with gold rendered by etched gold foil. A new group of scholars wrote articles for the commentary volume. As for the earlier volumes, the limited market consisted of serious collectors and libraries with rare book collections.

In 1957, the first popularly priced reproduction was published: the Kaufmann Haggadah, printed by offset lithography in Budapest. The edges of its reproduced pages were squared off and framed by white margins. An accompanying pamphlet contained an introduction by Alexander Scheiber, director of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Sold at \$15–25, it was soon out of print. A second facsimile of the Sarajevo Haggadah followed in 1963, this one in color, for approximately the same price as the Kaufmann Haggadah had initially sold for. With its lithographic plates printed in France, it was issued in an unlimited edition in several countries and reprinted for many years. Its introduction by historian Cecil Roth, included in the same volume, appeared in the language of each country in which it was published: the United States, England, France, Yugoslavia, Italy, Germany, and Israel. The Sarajevo Haggadah is the most-facsimiled Hebrew manuscript in existence, more because of its romantic history than its inherent beauty: in 1941, Nazis entering Sarajevo demanded that the manuscript be turned over to them. Fortunately, the secretary of the Bosnian National Museum's curator had just removed it under her shawl, hiding it with a local priest for the duration



of World War II. In 1983, a new edition appeared, a joint publication by two Yugoslav publishers. Pamphlets in Hebrew and English (not the same articles) are boxed with the facsimile. The colors are somewhat less intense than those of the 1963 edition, which permits the outlines and more details in the original to be seen. The paper is slightly less shiny, and the blank leaves on the verso of the illustrations reproduce each of the original's blank leaves, rather than repeating the same two blank leaves seen throughout the 1963 edition.

Popularly priced facsimiles—currently \$100 and under—now appear at the rate of two to four per year. Generally, they have the following in common: an accompanying text by a well-known scholar who summarizes the research on the manuscript and sometimes adds original analysis; a facsimile the size of the original and reproduced by offset lithography on medium-quality coated paper; squared-off pages, at times framed by neutral margins, to meet the needs of a standard binding. The best of the facsimiles of medieval manuscripts, in quality of both reproduction and scholarly commentary, have been published by Thames and Hudson in London: *The Ashkenazi Haggadah*, British Library Add. Ms. 14762 (1985) and *The Rylands Haggadah*, John Rylands University Library of Manchester, Heb. Ms. 6 (1989). Their introductions include a few black-and-white illustrations of comparative material. Because both books have had copublishers in different countries, cover design and/or additional casing varies. Several publishers in Israel and Europe, especially in Germany, have brought out facsimiles of eighteenth-century haggadot and other Hebrew manuscripts, as well as the most important printed illustrated haggadot. Introductory texts are often minimal. But these publications, along with the moderately priced medieval manuscript reproductions, have proved a boon for students of Jewish art since they permit study of the manuscript in its totality.

Facsimiles on the high end of the market are essential for academic rare book collections, as their reproductions are almost always much better than those of their moderately priced counterparts. After the 1927–28 Darmstadt Haggadah, the next facsimile of its class was the Bird's Head Haggadah, published by Tarshish Books in Jerusalem for the Leo Ary Mayer Library (1965–67). This high-quality collotype facsimile was printed by Max Jaffé in Vienna and sold for a modest \$120. The overall effect of this charming south German manuscript of ca. 1300, now in the Israel Museum, was spoiled by the dark grey margins added to show the contours of the original. Publisher/scholar Moshe Spitzer edited the excellent introductory volume by several authorities (whose names he often misspelled), which matched the facsimile in size and

in casing. Next came the Golden Haggadah in the British Library (Add. Ms. 27210), the most sumptuous of fourteenth-century Sefardi haggadot, published by Eugrammia Press and the Trustees of the British Library in 1970. Its \$500 price again seems modest compared to facsimiles today, especially considering its rich gold-leaf backgrounds, reproduced with gold foil and bearing tooled diaper patterns. The publisher skimped, however, on the companion volume, whose red cloth binding clashes with the facsimile's handsome calf binding, which reproduces the seventeenth-century tooling of the original. Its single essay, printed on shiny paper that has yellowed unevenly, is a detailed study of the illuminations written by Bezalel Narkiss, based on his Ph.D. dissertation.

In the 1980s the Graz printer/publisher Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt's, long famous for its collotype facsimiles, printed the Castellazo Pentateuch (1983, fortunately, since the original disappeared), the Kaniel Megilla (1984), and two manuscripts in the Jewish National and University Library: a tiny Grace after Meals (1983, no introduction, printed on white paper that does not reflect the nuances of the parchment), and the giant Worms Maḥzor (1985). The latter two were published by Cyelar Publishing Company, Ltd., London. A combination of lithographic printing methods was employed for the maḥzor (festival prayer book). Nearly all of the Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt's facsimiles, long considered the truest to their originals, are printed on the same heavy paper, which shows the grain of the parchment and all the nuances of the original manuscript. But over the years their facsimiles have come to look more like one another than like the originals. Nevertheless, this style is frequently imitated by low-cost facsimile publishers using cheaper photographic and printing processes on thinner paper.

This is what the expensive facsimiles, of both Hebrew and non-Hebrew manuscripts, have in common: until recently, photographic reproduction of the original by collotype (with the negative now exposed on a gelatin-coated aluminum plate rather than on the glass plates of the past), which publishers claimed the most accurate method; a binding that attempts to duplicate that of the original or look like one contemporaneous with it; a matching companion volume that usually includes the work of several scholars. There is no technical reason why ten thousand copies of these editions could not be printed because the aluminum plates used today can be mounted on rotary offset presses. Yet high-end editions are limited to between five hundred and six hundred copies, so that their value as collectors' items continues to rise. All fine facsimiles, Hebrew and non-Hebrew, are now priced between \$2000 and \$26,000. And until the entry of

Facsimile Editions of London into the field, all followed the Akademische Druck style.

To their credit, Linda and Michael Falter of Facsimile Editions have liberated the facsimile from the Akademische Druck look by reproducing each aspect of the original—its vellum, its ink, its colors, its gold and silver paint and leaf, and its binding. The first manuscript they chose was one of the most significant and handsome, the Kennicott Bible (Oxford, Bodleian Library Kennicott I), named for the Christian Hebraist who, as librarian, acquired it for the Radcliffe College Library in 1771. The complete Bible was written in 1476 in La Coruña, northwestern Spain (Galicia), by the outstanding scribe Moses ibn Zabara. The artist who illuminated and decorated 238 of the manuscript's 922 pages, Joseph ibn Hayyim, was Jewish. The Bible was commissioned by Isaac ben Solomon di Braga, who may have been a successful cloth merchant, according to the introduction. He may have left La Coruña well before the expulsion of the Jews in 1492, for the spectacular red morocco binding in the form of a box, tooled in Mudéjar style, was made by a Jewish binder active in Lisbon in the final quarter of the fifteenth century. At least six known box bindings, apparently on Hebrew books only, come from this Lisbon workshop.<sup>1</sup> After a possible residence in Lisbon, from which the Jews were expelled in 1496–97, Isaac di Braga undoubtedly immigrated to Germany because there a dark brownish-black calfskin case was made for the Bible, executed with a combination of molded leather and *cuir ciselé* techniques. The Bible in its Mudéjar box binding fit into the case after its metal bosses were removed. The name Isaac is incised within a central shield.

The Kennicott Bible—binding, box, and all—is perfectly preserved (there are a few red and tan leather repairs on the cover). Perhaps only thirty people have been allowed to study it at the Bodleian over the years. Its reproduction is thus a service to scholars as well as a delight to collectors. The Falters first sought to duplicate the look and feel, thickness and opacity of parchment as closely as possible. More than a year of experimentation went into making the special paper alone, manufactured by a small Alpine mill in Italy. The final printing, by Luigi Canton (Grafiche Milani), was accomplished on this oily, vegetable-fiber paper, with the offset-lithographic printing in eleven colors rendered cross-grain to enhance the parchment effect. Perfect color matching was achieved by constantly checking each proof of the laser-produced color separations against the original manuscript. Some proofs were remade as many as four times. Imitation gold and silver foil were afterwards applied by hand, and the fore-edges of the facsimile were gilt (the original's are gilt and gauffered). The tooling on all six sides of the

morocco box binding was reproduced by dies, so the surface of the simulated blind-tooling appears to be too shallow and smooth, emphasizing its machine-made look. On the original manuscript, the upper cover, which acts as a lid for the box, no longer fits tightly due to the upward pressure of the buckling parchment. This warped condition was not reproduced.

The companion volume, bound in untooled morocco like the facsimile volume with the title embossed and printed on fine paper, was written by Bezalel Narkiss and Aliza Cohen-Mushlin of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Here one would have liked to see a study by a textual scholar of Kennicott's text and its place in the transmission of the Bible text and its Masorah, as well as a more thorough and accurate codicological description by someone associated with the Hebrew Palaeography Project in Jerusalem. Since the field of both authors is manuscript illumination, however, the introduction suffers from omissions and misinformation in subjects outside the areas of decoration and illustration. Much of the misinformation can be found in the discussion of the Kennicott Bible's binding. Here are some examples:

1. "Cost of the binding negligible" (p. 23). It is doubtful that the cost of the binding, while less than the cost of illuminating, was negligible, for not only was a box binding more complicated to craft, but the design and tooling were also more intricate than tooling found on most Hebrew manuscripts of the fifteenth century and far more complex than those of the first half of the fourteenth century, the date of the contract on which the authors base this conclusion.

2. "After sewing each of the quires, the binder tied their cords together at the back into six double, knotted cords which were glued to the spine" (p. 85). Binders then as now sewed each quire, one by one, onto lay cords that had been strung on a sewing frame. This can be seen in a twelfth-century drawing in the Staatsbibliothek Bamberg, Msc. Patr. 5, f. 1r.<sup>2</sup> Double thongs of leather, customary for Spain, were used for the Kennicott Bible. The remaining ends of the leather lay cords, after being cut from the sewing frame, were laced into the boards cut for the covers. The sides of the box would have been built up from the lower cover before it was attached.

3. "These bands were raised with special tweezers to enclose the double, knotted cords while the skin of the spine was still damp and could be stretched" (p. 85). Bands are nipped with a band nipper either to straighten them or, after the leather is glued to the spine, to emphasize them, not to produce them. Nor would any binder apply the leather to the boards before first sewing the quires on lay cords, or before the boards were attached, because one piece of leather covered



the whole book and because he would have to know the exact width of the spine.

4. Morocco is tanned goatskin, not red-brown tinted leather, as implied (p. 85).

5. "The next stage was to fix the wooden head and tail sides to the box, covering them with more goatskin, glued and smoothed with an ivory spatula so that the overlapping joins would be distinguished only with difficulty" (p. 85). The entire box, sides and all, was covered with one skin. There are no overlapping joins; that is why they cannot be seen.

6. The tools would have been made of brass, not iron, which would have ruined the damp leather. Rope tool designs are not made with actual tiny ropes ("a piece of rope," p. 85) but with a metal tool that has a relief design resembling rope. Dots were not made by an awl, which would have broken the surface of the leather, but by a metal tool with a tiny relief circle on its head.

7. Contrary to an opinion cited by the authors (p. 87),<sup>3</sup> what is characteristic of fifteenth-century Mudéjar tooling, as opposed to fourteenth-century, is the complex interlace based on the circle, as seen on the Kennicott Bible, not the greater width of the reserve strapwork bands.

8. It is easier to believe that the binder came to Lisbon from Toledo in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, because the Mudéjar patterns on the box bindings are similar to those of Toledo bindings, than to believe that the style originated in Portugal before its transmission to Toledo (p. 88) and that Isaac di Braga sent his precious manuscript to Castille to be bound. Nor is the style characteristic of Portuguese tooling, which is relatively simple.<sup>4</sup> Complex Mudéjar tooling of bindings associated with books written, printed, or decorated in Lisbon was more likely to have been done by emigrating Jewish or converso binders from Spain.

9. A "doublure" is not "two layers of vellum" (p. 50), but the term for a leather (in later periods, fabric or decorated paper) lining inside of the cover. A pastedown, found in the same place and with the same decorative purpose, is made of parchment or paper, with designs painted or cut out. Pastedowns are not tooled. Therefore comparing the Kennicott's pastedowns to blind- and gold-tooled doublures (p. 87) is like comparing apples with oranges.

10. The additional calfskin brown-black case was not at all characteristic of Spain. The example of the *cuir-cisé* and stippled box (not a binding) from Henry Thomas, *Early Spanish Bookbindings*, is so German-looking that it is more reasonable to believe that it was made in Germany, or by a German binder, from leather (not morocco).<sup>5</sup> Contrary to what the authors state, *cuir-cisé* was not a Spanish binding technique and Mudéjar tooling was not accomplished by a cut

leather technique. Thomas himself corrects the error made by E. P. Goldschmidt.<sup>6</sup> The leather case for the Kennicott would have been made by a binder, not a stationer (p. 89), who was essentially a provider of materials for books, exemplars for copying, or scribal services.

11. "[I]t can be deduced that at least the penultimate quire, if not the whole Bible, was detached from the spine. . . . The present stitching and gluing of the quires to the spine seems to have been done after the manuscript reached the Radcliffe Library over two hundred years ago" (pp. 30, 88). As for the inverted imprint of the cut-out pastedown of the upper cover, observed by the authors on the last page of the penultimate quire, f. 445v (not seen in the facsimile), it can better be explained by the possibility that the binder stacked the painted cut-out parchment with that quire, onto which the pattern bled, before the pastedown was glued to the upper inner cover. Or he may have pressed the cut-out parchment in the already-sewn book. It is hardly likely that a later Christian owner would have taken apart such a large and superbly bound book just to have the decorated arcades in the wrong place upside down at the beginning of the book, and then that the Radcliffe Library would have taken the book apart again to put the quire in its correct place. The authors could easily have verified that the Kennicott's present sewing and binding are the original by consulting Christopher Clarkson, the noted authority in conservation and binding, who was then Conservation Officer at the Bodleian Library.

The strength of the introduction lies in its detailed study of the decorations and illuminations by the artist Joseph ibn Hayyim, who, the authors believe, may have been the son of the artist Abraham ben Judah ibn Hayyim, author of a treatise written in Judeo-Portuguese on manuscript illumination in Loulé, Portugal, apparently in 1462. The Bible's illuminations include the arcaded pages framing Rabbi David Kimhi's grammatical treatise, *Sefer Mikhlol*, at the beginning and end of the Bible; the carpet pages between the main sections of the Bible; the decorated *parasha* ornaments; the embellished panels and frames at the end of individual books, Psalm numerals and the scribe's colophon, display letters, and text illustrations; the Menorah and implements of the Sanctuary, a popular Sefardi iconography; the micrography; and the artist's colophon. The generous inclusion of both black-and-white and color illustrations to demonstrate the authors' conclusions is exceptionally useful to students and scholars. Particularly fascinating is the discussion of how long it took to write the Bible (perhaps ten months), and how much the illuminator may have earned, even though some of the conclusions were based on the previously mentioned contract to

illuminate and bind a Hebrew manuscript written one hundred fifty years earlier in Majorca. It may very well be, as the authors assume, that the scribe lived with and was supported by the patron during the time he wrote the Bible, a known but not universal medieval Jewish practice. But we do not know whether Jewish illuminators lived with their patrons. The stationer certainly would not have lodged with the patron (p. 94), nor would the bookbinder have, for even if Isaac di Braga already lived in Lisbon when the book was bound, it would have been a major undertaking to move the sewing frame, presses, and tools to the patron's home. Nor is it reasonable to believe that the scribe would have had to pay the illuminator and the binder out of his own fee (although he or a stationer may very well have recommended these craftspersons).

The major source for the design of the layout, as well as stylistic and iconographic aspects of the Kennicott Bible, was the Cervera Bible, written and decorated in this Spanish town in 1300. Birth records of 1375 and 1439 written in La Coruña show that the Cervera Bible was in that Galician town for at least a century before it became a model for the Kennicott Bible. The delightful zoo- and anthropomorphic colophon is but one of several instances of Joseph ibn Hayyim's borrowings from the illuminations of Joseph the Frenchman, artist of the earlier manuscript. The authors thoroughly examine other possible sources of the Kennicott Bible's style and iconography: earlier Castilian Bibles, Hebrew illuminated manuscripts from the Lisbon "workshop" of the final quarter of the fifteenth century, and engraved mid-fifteenth-century playing cards from Germany by "the Master of the Power of Women."

The relatively few errors in the introduction do not detract from the great value of the Kennicott Bible facsimile. The only aspects of the original that the *Falters* have not reproduced in the two facsimiles they have published thus far are the original quire sewing for the binding and the smell of the manuscripts. To my mind, the Kennicott is surpassed only by the second facsimile published by the *Falters*: the Rothschild Miscellany.

The Rothschild Miscellany, the most lavish of all illuminated Hebrew manuscripts with 816 of its 948 pages elegantly decorated or illustrated, was illuminated in northern Italy between 1465 and 1475. At one time part of the collection of the Paris Rothschilds, it was stolen by the Nazis and after World War II was offered for sale in New York, where it was recognized and eventually given as a gift to the Israel Museum in Jerusalem by James de Rothschild.

A new paper, made by the same mill, reproduced the thin, soft vellum of the original. Because real gold would not stick to this special paper, imitation gold

again had to be substituted, but it was hand applied to a built-up layer to reproduce the effect of the original's burnished gold leaf. Since flat gold and powdered gold were also used in the original, all three types were reproduced accurately. Even the original pricking, used to mark the place for ruling scribal guidelines, was imitated. The edges of the printed pages were cut out and "aged" and gilt with twenty-three-carat gold leaf. The Rothschild Miscellany, unlike the Kennicott Bible, was disbound from its modern binding in order to photograph it for the facsimile, which enabled scholars to examine all of its codicological details, as Iris Fishof, Chief Curator of Judaica and Ethnography at the Israel Museum, points out in her brief introduction.

The nickname for the almost perfectly intact manuscript (only three leaves are missing)—*Kol-Bo* ("Everything-in-it")—is apt, for it contains thirty-seven distinct texts, opening with Psalms, followed by two halakhic (Jewish legal) treatises, then Job (with commentary) and Proverbs. These opening biblical quires with their commentaries were written by two different scribes after the rest of the manuscript was completed but before the illumination was begun. The bulk of the manuscript contains the prayer book for daily, sabbath, and festival worship; the Passover haggadah; selected works by Maimonides; liturgical poetry and marriage hymns; history by Yosifon (the tenth-century pseudo-Josephus); the *Meshal HaKadmoni*—a Hebrew fable book comparable to the *Bidpai Fables* (*Kalilah wa-Dimnah*)—composed in Spain in 1281 by Isaac ibn Sahula; other moralistic works; poetry by Judah Halevi; and a calendar. The pages were laid out by the scribe with a main text surrounded by marginal smaller texts, which contain Rashi's commentaries alongside the three biblical books, plus moral, halakhic, and historical treatises, and other works that were related to the main sections on the same page.

For the scholarly commentary volume, the publishers wisely commissioned several essays: on the historical background of the Jews of Italy, by Shlomo Simonsohn; on each of the Miscellany's literary units, by Israel Ta-Shema; on palaeographical and codicological aspects of the manuscript, by Malachi Beit-Arié; on the style and iconography of the illustrations, by Luisella Mortara-Ottolenghi. These authors independently conclude that the manuscript must have been produced in northern Italy for a Jew of Ashkenazi origin between 1453 and 1479/80.

The patron was Moshe ben Yekuti'el Ha-Kohen, a banker, member of the Ashkenazi settlement in northern Italy, in the vicinity of Treviso. His name appears in the prayerbook section in a blessing made for the person called up to recite the benediction for the Torah reading in the synagogue, the *Mi*



*She-berach* (f. 106r). Moshe HaKohen arrived in Cremona in 1465 and acquired a bank which was his until 1475, the year in which he probably died. As an active moneylender, he was on good terms with the Duke of Milan, Galeazzo Maria Sforza, and acted as arbitrator in disputes concerning Jews. One of the Miscellany's artists, Bonifacio Bembo, worked for the Sforza family and was accustomed to following detailed directions for the proper execution of paintings for his patrons. So the scenes in the Miscellany that illustrate Jewish rituals and holiday customs are painted with great accuracy, although at times, as Mortara-Ottolenghi points out, iconography was drawn from Christian manuscripts. For Italian Jewish manuscripts, it was the exceptionally close coordination of the scribe or patron and the artist that produced this realism and conveys such a splendid idea of Renaissance Jewish culture. Who was the scribe? As was the common Ashkenazi practice, he did not leave a colophon, nor did he indicate his identity by dotting a name or an acrostic in the text. But his name may be found, according to Beit-Arié, at the end of a treatise on the calendar cycles, where he wrote, "Be strong and of good courage. Shabbetai [the name] selah. Amen."

In his codicological study *Malachi Beit-Arié*, Professor of Codicology and Palaeography at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and former director of the Jewish National and University Library, found that the first seven quires with biblical texts were written by perhaps two scribes separately from the rest of the manuscript, which was written entirely by a single scribe (his foliation and table of contents on f. 473r as well as different handwriting prove this). The square Ashkenazi script found in many Hebrew manuscripts from northern Italy was used for the main, inner text (with a few pages in classic Ashkenazi style), and a smaller, semi-cursive hand for the outer, marginal text. One of Beit-Arié's important discoveries about the disbound manuscript was the enumeration of the illustrations, consecutively for each separate quire, found in the inner margins close to the fold and at times in the outer margins (most of these were cut off in later trimming). These were written in Indo-Arabic numerals for the benefit of the non-Jewish artists. In one instance the scribe wrote "painting" in Hebrew as well. Beit-Arié demonstrates that the scribe laid out his text ahead of time with planned spaces for all the illustrations, the common practice for manuscript illumination. Display letters—the initial words—were written after the text was completed (since a change of quill was necessary), and later the illuminator covered these with gold. According to the author, the system of numbering "may well prove the illustrations were copied from a model" and "artists . . . referred to parallel numbering in a model in order to copy

relevant miniatures" (pp. 92, 98). It would have been interesting to know more precisely how these numbers may have been used. Mortara-Ottolenghi believes that the artists numbered the illustrations first and then inserted the numerals in the margins. Obviously, there was no one model codex, for the iconography was too varied, as we learn from Mortara-Ottolenghi's essay. Perhaps the numbers referred to a list made by scribe and patron together, which was then reviewed by the artist(s) with scribe or patron, and preliminary sketches were produced quire by quire.

The codicological features of the manuscript are shown by Beit-Arié to be part Ashkenazi and part Italian in character. No other single dated Hebrew manuscript has all of the exact same characteristics: six-sheet quires, nearly all of very thin and refined vellum whose flesh and hair sides are at times distinguishable, at times alike (equalized), and whose sides are not always matched at a given opening; pricking of inner and outer margins, with double prickings observed for the complex ruling of guidelines for the inner and outer texts' two sizes of script (typical of Ashkenazi manuscripts); ruling with thin black lead point. As in Ashkenazi practice (where letters were written between two ruled lines), in the Rothschild Miscellany one additional line was ruled below the last planned written line, even though the letters were suspended from the upper line. (This may reflect a practice carried over from Torah-scroll writing.) Other codicological aspects discussed are graphic fillers and other devices used to justify margins, and catchwords drawn from the square-hand inner text at the end of the quire. In all cases, the author brings numerous examples from Germany and Italy, as well as exceptions to the rule, from his deep knowledge of medieval Hebrew manuscripts and from the data gathered by the Hebrew Palaeography Project in Jerusalem. Such an essay for the Kennicott Bible facsimile would have been most welcome.

The essay on the illuminations and the artists by Louisella Mortara-Ottolenghi, Professor of Codicology and History of Illumination at the Università degli Studi di Milano, emphasizes the importance of this manuscript as a masterpiece of Italian miniature art. Mortara-Ottolenghi concludes that the miniatures were executed by two Lombard workshops between 1465 and 1475, with the work divided among numerous artists and miniaturists. The masters of these workshops were Bonifacio Bembo and Cristoforo De Predis (the latter for the biblical books). As with other comparable works, the artists were undoubtedly all Christian. For the illustrations they relied on several models, among them Ashkenazi, Sefardi, and Italian Hebrew illuminated manuscripts. Sometimes the artists drew from their own works or from those of

other illuminators of Christian books and art. Some illuminations were invented specifically for the texts they illustrated; some may have been suggested by the patron. There was always perfect coordination of scribe, patron, and artist.

Because the binding was modern and not particularly distinguished, the publishers decided to commission a leather binding that would resemble one contemporaneous with the manuscript. The selected model (British Library, Ms. Henry Davis gift, M73) has a brown goatskin (morocco) binding with blind tooling in Mudéjar style, a style known in Italy in the latter quarter of the fifteenth century. The catches and plates for the thongs were made of silver.

My few criticisms of the essays in the companion volume could have been avoided by more careful editing. One concerns imprecise translations from Hebrew to English. For example, Beit Arié uses the term "parchment" for vellum. This is understandable because the Hebrew term *klaf* applies to both, sometimes qualified by "coarse" or "delicate." Thus the leaves, which very well may be of uterine vellum, are called parchment, the term associated today with the heavier product. Similarly, "devices to produce an even left margin" (p. 108ff.) is a rather roundabout way of describing justification. There are a few errors in punctuation, inconsistent capitalization, missing words, inexplicable references to index cards in footnotes, and a few pages out of order (192–93 for 194–95). Lack of coordination among articles can be seen in Simonsohn's strange conclusion that "[the patron's] identity and that of the scribe and artist are yet to be determined" when Beit-Arié and Mortara-Ottolenghi had so brilliantly identified them. And in view of all the research in the past century on Jewish art of all ages, it seems naive for a historian to maintain: "Representational art, although not a major pursuit among Jews before modern times, chiefly due to the biblical injunction contained in the Ten Commandments, was not altogether avoided, being employed mainly for decorative or illustrative purposes." A map of Italy showing cities and regions mentioned in all of the essays would have been most useful (as a map of Spain would have been for the Kennicott Bible).

Finally, I take issue with Mortara-Ottolenghi's dating of Gershom Soncino's first printed edition of the *Meshal HaKadmoni* in Brescia to 1490–91. It should probably be dated to 1491–92 at earliest. This calculation is based on recent research by Esther Bienenfeld, who demonstrated that the iconography of woodcuts is often closer to the Venice, January 1491 edition of Aesop's *Fables* than to the illustrations of the Rothschild Miscellany's *Meshal HaKadmoni*.<sup>7</sup> It would have been interesting for the author to have compared the iconography of this section to manuscript editions of

Aesop's *Fables*, such as the "Medici Aesop" (Florence, 1488), slightly later than the Rothschild Miscellany.<sup>8</sup> While the layout of the illustrations and style of the Spencer Aesop and the Miscellany's *Meshal HaKadmoni* are not identical, the Miscellany's fable section is more similar stylistically and iconographically to the Greek manuscript than it is to any of the other four Hebrew manuscript copies of the *Meshal HaKadmoni* that were produced before the printed edition appeared.

But all in all, the commentary volume is worthy of the magnificent facsimile, and one can look forward to more facsimiles produced by the Falter of Facsimile Editions. (Next is the Barcelona Haggadah in the British Library.)

At a recent seminar on Jewish art, academics bemoaned the fact that facsimiles are far beyond the budget of the scholars who need them most. This unfortunate situation makes it mandatory for large academic libraries where relevant courses are taught to invest in them. The price of these two magnificently produced facsimiles, each now close to \$7000, looks like a bargain compared to the recent *Book of Kells* facsimile at \$18,000. The *Alba Bible*, scheduled for 1992, will cost \$26,000.

## Notes

1. Leila Avrin, "The Sephardi Box Binding," *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, v. 29, 1989, pp. 27–43, and "The Box Binding in the Klau Library, Hebrew Union College," *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*, v. 17, 1989, pp. 27–35.
2. Vera Trost, *Scriptorium: Book Production in the Middle Ages*, Heidelberg, 1986, p. 9.
3. Therese Metzger, "Les manuscrits hébreux et leurs reliures: La reliure du ms. hébr. 819 de la Bibliothèque Nationale à Paris," *Revue Française d'Histoire du Livre*, v. 61, N.S. 36, 1982, pp. 349–70.
4. Matias Lima, *A Encadernação em Portugal*, Coimbra, 1933, and Aires Augusto Nascimento and António Dias Diogo, *Encadernação Portuguesa Medieval Alcobaca*, Lisbon, 1984.
5. Henry Thomas, *Early Spanish Bookbindings XI–XV Centuries*, London, 1939 for 1936 (Illustrated Monograph No. 23), No. 13.
6. Thomas, *Early*, p. xxiii, and E. P. Goldschmidt in *Gothic & Renaissance Bookbindings*, London, 1928, pp. 79–82, 138, 157–59.
7. Esther Bienenfeld, *Meshal HaKadmoni*, M.A. thesis, The Hebrew University's School of Library and Archive Studies, Jerusalem, 1991.
8. *The Medici Aesop, Spencer MS 50 from the Spencer Collection of the New York Public Library*, intro. Everett Fahy, tr. Bernard McTigue, New York, 1989.





## BOOK REVIEWS

*Contemplating the Ancients: Aesthetic and Social Issues in Early Chinese Portraiture.* By Audrey Spiro. 259 + xv pp., 59 illustrations, glossary, bibliography, index. \$35.00.

This eminently readable book treats a painting genre of central importance for its period, portraiture in Han and the Southern Dynasties. The images it discusses—generally exemplary figures of sages or cultural heroes—are interpreted in light of political, social, and aesthetic developments in specific eras. Its particular focus is the late fourth- and fifth-century tomb reliefs of the Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove, for which the author provides extensive background information, surveying current non-Buddhist scholarship on the Southern Dynasties. For these reasons, the book will be a useful addition to class reading lists and personal bookshelves.

After Han, as Alexander Soper has remarked, there were no more depictions of “cowboys and Indians.” In other words, sword-wielding warriors were displaced as pictorial subjects by Neo-Daoist exemplars seated in a minimal landscape setting. Within this context, Audrey Spiro focuses on artistic representations of the inner qualities prized in Han Confucianism or the Neo-Daoism of the Southern Dynasties. Thus, after a general introduction on portraiture, a chapter on Han deals selectively with portraits of the deceased on early Han mortuary banners and later Han images of sages and paragons of filial piety. This chapter analyzes in some depth scenes of Confucius paying homage to the elder teacher Laozi, at times accompanied by the child sage-genius Xiang To. The author suggests that such scenes were not only moral and social but also political statements, possibly even signs of adherence to the “Confucian” faction at the end of the Han dynasty. But since—as Spiro notes—background information on the politics of tomb occupants is usually lacking, this interpretation seems unlikely to apply in all cases. Other readings, such as the equation of moral character with costume, pose, and gesture, seem more convincing.

After a brief section on northern paintings of tomb masters done in Han Chinese style into the mid fourth century, the remainder of the book deals with the new southern image of man as seen in relief murals of the Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove and the earlier recluse Rong Qiqi. Four examples of these reliefs were unearthed in the 1960s: One dating to the late fourth or early fifth century was found in a tomb near the Xishan Bridge on the outskirts of Nanjing, and three others, one inferred on the basis of an inscribed brick, were excavated in Danyang County, Jiangsu, from tombs identifiable as imperial burials of the Southern Qi dynasty (A.D. 479–502). Spiro claims that the Nanjing tomb, of unknown patronage, is not an imperial grave and assumes that the mural’s subject, portraits of Neo-Daoist wits of some hundred years earlier, was adopted “perhaps even as an idiosyncratic choice” by or for a cultivated gentleman of a great family who identified with the Seven Worthies. It is not clear to me that imperial connections or patronage are out of the question here. For one thing, all extant murals of the Seven Worthies are done in the same technique and are approximately the same size, and similar construction methods are used in all the tomb chambers. The Danyang tombs are larger, but they were also built at a later date, between 493 and 502, and the images of the Seven Worthies are variations on the Nanjing models even if the identifications are changed or misunderstood. More will be said below on the question of patronage.

The last five chapters introduce and identify the Nanjing mural

depictions, trace their historical and literary background, discuss contemporary interpretations of the Seven Worthies and parallel exemplars, investigate the cultural context of the Danyang imperial graves, and analyze the style and expressive intent of these ideal portraits. Once again, Spiro focuses on the alliance and “realliance of Art and Politics,” interpreting art as a reflection of the situation and interests of ruling families. By the end of Han, the Confucian Virtue initially fostered by emperors had been assimilated into the culture of provincial landowners. In the Southern Dynasties new values such as an emphasis on individual talent were to evolve in conjunction with the rise of the great families, the Wang and Xie clans, who had emigrated from the north. These values would be adopted by imperial patrons such as the Xiao ruling clan of the Southern Qi (and most notably by the successor Xiaos of the Liang court). As for portraiture, Han models of decorum, Confucian types properly accoutered and posed in correct attitudes, would give way to the Seven Worthies, self-possessed and tranquil in a natural setting that indicated inner harmony, yet not overly relaxed since the *ziran*, or spontaneity, of the Neo-Daoists was now fused with the inner correctness of Confucian Virtue.

One question the author does not address in detail is why these “like-minded companions” were placed in the tombs. Would they benefit the deceased through their contrasting virtues, as the third-century Tian Yu hoped when he expressed his wish to be buried next to an ancient worthy (p. 118)? The Han concept of the grave as a home away from home, where one would wish congenial company, may have persisted even in the more sparsely furnished Southern Dynasties tombs. But on the walls of the three Danyang imperial graves the Green Dragon and White Tiger enticed by feathered men seem poised for a quick get away, and this message is underlined by the mounted military escort in the lower registers. What, then, is the role of the Seven Worthies and Rong Qiqi placed in the upper level behind the large-scale directional beasts? Are they exemplars of coolness and wit in this world or the next? Are they literary immortals appreciated for their human qualities? Or have they made it to the ranks of immortal immortals? At one point Spiro suggests that they “represent the terrestrial existence of the deceased”; elsewhere she hedges: “emperors wished to be seen as worthy of admission to the Bamboo Grove, in this world and the next” (pp. 142, 152).

The last comment follows an interpretation of the Seven Worthies as possible low-level immortals in the hierarchy of Mao Shan Daoism, which is seen as an influence on the Danyang imagery. In my opinion this interpretation would diminish the appeal of the leading poets in the group as failed heroes in the Chinese literary tradition: Ruan Ji, the inept Daoist whistler who was bested by the hermit of Sumen, and Xi Kang, who realized that he had not achieved immortality when he saw his shadow before being executed. There is no speculation here as to whether or not the Seven Worthies in southern tomb murals parallel the paragons of filial piety depicted on Northern Wei coffins from 485 on. Northern funerary decoration clearly consists of a mixture of Buddhist, “Daoist,” and Confucian motifs, and a Buddhist element is present later in the Liang tomb columns at Nanjing. Spiro does not discuss any possible Buddhist influence on the Danyang iconography. Yet certain items in the Dragon and Tiger reliefs should be mentioned: the rain of flowers as described in *sūtras*, the peacock-winged attendants flying in the Western angelic style, and the robed food bearers flying by upswept scarves and knee-bent scissor



kicks like earlier *apsarases*.

Questions of iconography lead into issues of patronage and style. The author believes that members of the Qi imperial family selected imagery from workshop patterns "fraught with meaning, sacred and secular, for their lives" (p. 151). An art historian's dilemma is how to interpret that imagery without knowing for sure what the patron or designer intended. Could the portraits of the Seven Worthies in the Danyang tombs have had specific relevance to the lives of the deceased, or were they simply "normative for imperial tombs of the dynasty" (p. 124)? The Huqiao Xiu'anling tomb is that of Xiao Daosheng (d. 478), posthumously elevated to the rank of emperor by his son Ming Di (r. 494–98). If the Seven Worthies, whose presence is indicated by the inscribed brick, were appropriate for the father, a nonruler, would they also have been found in the tomb of the son, a competent military leader who disposed of some twenty clan members? And what about the portraits in the Jinjiacun and Wujiacun graves, the probable resting places of the two last emperors who died in their late teens? One of them, the dynastic debauchee known as the Marquis of Eastern Confusion (r. 498–501), when in his mid teens built palaces that included the Seven Worthies with female attendants (!) among the ceiling decorations. (A later report suggested that his tomb might be that of another posthumous emperor.) Is it possible that the Seven Worthies were suitable company for inept or nonfunctioning rulers, as in later periods wine, women, and song were the consolation for failed scholars who turned to literary pursuits? On the whole, I am inclined to agree that the Seven Worthies were "normative" images in Southern Qi imperial tombs. In my opinion that helps to explain the relatively poor quality of these portraits, which have declined into stereotypes, mislabeled and misunderstood. One scholar believes that all these portraits were originally workshop productions. There remains the question of how close the court connections with these Nanjing and Danyang workshops were.

Possible court connections are also a factor in assessing the issue of style. Were the thin, raised lines of contours on these reliefs "almost a deliberate choice" to evoke the weightlessness of immortals, as Spiro suggests (p. 151)? Of course, this type of depiction is already present in the Nanjing Seven Worthies mural. Since an original brush drawing of the design underlay the incised wood-blocks or molds that imprinted the multiple bricks of these reliefs, it is legitimate to search for links with contemporary painting. The continuous, fine-line contouring of Gu Kaizhi and Lu Tanwei, the dominant court artists of the late fourth and fifth centuries, inevitably comes to mind, and these painters are the most famous names associated with individual and group portraits of the Seven Worthies. Presumably, a patron familiar with court art would have appreciated the contours of the linear relief style. Spiro does not emphasize connections with painting but gives relevant information in the notes. Despite the subjectivity of quality assessments, I believe it is worth noting the highly convincing, upswept draperies of celestials on the Danyang reliefs of the Dragon and Tiger, in contrast to the stiff, lifeless folds of the Seven Worthies at these sites. By this time the Seven Worthies composition was some hundred years old and artist-craftsmen may have preferred to concentrate their skills on the more energetic mode of defining supernatural beings. The mislabeling of the portraits does, in my opinion, indicate a lack of care. Hence, I see the Danyang Seven Worthies as the end of a cycle, no doubt tied in with dynastic decline. Spiro evidently prefers a more upbeat ending.

One more point should be raised here in connection with quality: Is imagery of this sort inflated when workshop productions are discussed in the context of the best literature of the period? Of course, Chinese art has traditionally clung to the coattails of

literature. On the other hand, Spiro makes almost no use of contemporary painting texts, apart from Yao Zui's comment on Xie He's overdetailed portraits, which is cited to underline the argument that resemblance is "an irrelevance." Thus, *qi yun* and *sheng dong* come in at the end only by the back door, as it were, and Xie He's emphasis on "vitality" can be viewed "with irony" (pp. 175–76). It perhaps should be observed that Yao Zui's rather flowery *Xu hua pin* remarks, composed by the age of sixteen for the Liang Crown Prince, may lack maturity of judgment.

No doubt the fifth chapter, with anecdotes from the *Shishuo xinyu* (SSXY in the text), will be a favorite for many readers, and the author's style is well suited to this material. Spiro's narrative proceeds by antithesis: an exemplar is followed by an anti- or counter-exemplar. If one line of argument is developed, the opposite is also likely to be explored. This makes for lively, if occasionally confusing, reading. Suspense is sometimes injected into the narrative, as when the book about the Xie from their point of view finally turns out to be the SSXY (pp. 117–18). A vivid exposition is punctuated by pithy paragraph conclusions that can be savored like the SSXY puns. Since Spiro's content is so interesting, one cannot say in Southern Dynasties parlance that style makes the book, but it does add spice. This work is a good introduction to early portraiture as well as to the artistic and political culture of the Southern Dynasties.

SUSAN BUSH

*The New Chinese Painting, 1949–1986.* By Joan Lebold Cohen. 167 pp., maps and illustrations. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1987. \$19.95 (paper).

*Zhongguo xiandai huihua shi (A history of modern Chinese painting).* By Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan. 364 pp., illustrations. [Nanjing], Jiangsu: Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 1986. RMB\$3.85 (paper).

*Haiwai kan dalu yishu (Art in mainland China after 1949).* By Chen Yingde [Chen Ying-teh]. 410 pp., illustrations. Taipei: Yishujia chubanshe, 1987. NT\$350.00 (paper).

*Taiwan meishu fengyun sishinian (Forty turbulent years of art in Taiwan).* By Lin Xingyue. 263 pp., illustrations. Taipei: Zili wanbao, 1987. NT\$180.00 (paper).

In the past ten years, modern and contemporary Chinese paintings have received much more scholarly attention, particularly by serious art historians working in the West, than at any previous time in this century. In fact, Michael Sullivan's pioneering but now outdated work, *Chinese Art in the Twentieth Century*, had remained the only major book since 1959.<sup>1</sup>

Among recent publications on the subject, Joan Lebold Cohen's work begins where Sullivan's book ends, contributing importantly to our understanding of Chinese painting from 1949 to 1986. What makes Cohen's study unique are her many personal interviews with the artists, accompanied by her own photographs of her subjects. The book provides an excellent introduction to Chinese painting since the Cultural Revolution; though subtitled "1949–1986," it treats the pre-Cultural Revolution period only briefly. Cohen argues that contemporary Chinese painting displays a "new realism" or "new truth in realism," developed principally from China's ancient realistic tradition and secondarily from Western influences. I believe, however, that the number of Western styles available to influence Chinese artists is somewhat circumscribed by the availability of reproductions and exhibitions of original works. For example, Wang Haiqing's "Bole, A Wise Man

Who Knows How to Choose Horses," dated 1980, shows the strong influence of the Symbolist artist Gustav Klimt in its geometric juxtaposition and cropped composition (p. 78). The artist probably saw reproductions of Klimt's work in the library of the Central Academy of Arts in Beijing. The complex relationship of Chinese painting to realism is demonstrated by Luo Zhongli's "My Father," dated 1980 (p. 106), which was probably influenced by the photo-realism of Chuck Close. Although it took first prize in the Second Art Exhibition by Young Artists in 1980 and is now in the National Art Gallery in Beijing, this painting was criticized by cultural officials for portraying a suffering, pessimistic peasant. Clearly, many in China today simply cannot escape their long period of indoctrination into Soviet-derived "social realism" and an art education in which academic style is made to serve socialist good. In fact, Luo Zhongli's "Father" is more than just a realistic portrayal of what he sees with his eyes. It is also calculated social criticism. The large size of the painting, usually reserved for political figures, emphasizes the subject's monumentality and importance. Interestingly, the artist has added several features common to popular belief or superstition. For example, the spot near the nose is called a *kuminzhi* ("spot of suffering") because of the constant suffering it is supposed to bring to its bearer. The curved ear, according to folk belief, is a sign of a man who is bound to be dominated by his wife. On the other hand, perhaps in deference to the authorities, the artist has placed a pen near the peasant's ear, suggesting that he may be a student, presumably of politically correct material. Despite its relatively superficial analysis of the many paintings illustrated, Cohen's book familiarizes the reader with the diversity of styles in Chinese painting in the post-Cultural Revolution period.

One of the most notable recent books on modern Chinese painting is *Zhongguo xiandai huihua shi* by Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan, two young critics in Nanjing. Li Xiaoshan gained notoriety in 1985 by severely criticizing the "conservative" camp of older Chinese painters.<sup>2</sup> Covering the period from Qi Baishi to the early 1980s, the book offers the first comprehensive history of modern Chinese painting ever published. It is intentionally polemical, protesting the imposition of a suffocating ideology on artists since 1949. The authors are also refreshingly straightforward in their criticism of the sloppy late work of Chen Shifa and Huang Zhou, even if their criticism of the Lingnan School is not justified.<sup>3</sup> Despite its lack of large or color reproductions, the book contains over two hundred small black-and-white illustrations. It is a pity that the bibliography does not include more biographies of artists and books that reproduce their work. One also wishes that the authors had been able to incorporate research on modern Chinese painting conducted outside China, much of which unfortunately remains unpublished.<sup>4</sup>

The Paris-based critic Chen Yingde collects seventeen of his essays on art in mainland China since 1949 in *Haiwai kan dalu yishu*; the majority deal with painting. This comprehensive volume contains many excellent color and black-and-white reproductions. In one of his most interesting essays, a critique of Ai Zhongxin's monograph *Xu Beihong yanjiu*,<sup>5</sup> Chen Yingde demonstrates convincingly that Ai Zhongxin incorrectly traced Xu Beihong's artistic pedigree to Corot. He also argues persuasively that Xu Beihong resisted modernism while studying in Paris and instead learned academicism from such *peintres pompiers* as Pascal-Adolphe-Jean Dagnan-Bouveret (1852-1929). Although a dose of French academicism might have been refreshing in the early stages of Chinese oil painting, Xu Beihong's espousal of "social realism" was to a large extent politically motivated and has proved stifling to Chinese painting. Chen Yingde's major essay deals with traditional Chinese painting, or *guohua*, since 1949, treating comprehensively

the joy and sorrow of being a Chinese painter during these turbulent years.<sup>6</sup> The book also pays attention to the institutional constraints that result from cultural politics. These constraints, which are crucial to an understanding of Chinese art in its broader contexts, affect exhibition space, art schools, and art periodicals. We learn that art periodicals are controlled by the government and are therefore sensitive indicators of fluctuations in the government's cultural policy. *Maishu*, one of the most important government-controlled art periodicals, has been the battleground for different factions of artists, critics, and bureaucrats since its inception (except during a hiatus in its publication from 1966 to 1976). For instance, in late 1983, during the "anti-spiritual-pollution" campaign, the Chinese Artists Association held a meeting in Suzhou to denounce "individualism," "liberalism," and other "bourgeois" views and practices; in January 1984 these denunciations were published in *Maishu*. Li Xianting, one of the journal's editors, lost his job, presumably because he published or sponsored articles praising young artists, criticizing officially sponsored "realism," and advocating abstraction and self-expression in art. Chen Yingde's discussion of art school as a major site of state ideology and social management is equally compelling. Written in a lively style, the book is a rich source of information and documents, including a letter on Tong Xiwen by Yuan Yunsheng. The absence of a bibliography, however, limits the value of this otherwise readable book for scholars.

Although many publications and exhibitions devoted to art in mainland China since 1950 have appeared in the last decade, it is distressing to note the paucity of serious studies, publications, and exhibitions about Chinese art produced in Taiwan during the same period. The reasons for this neglect probably lie outside academia. Taiwan has been generally perceived as provincial both by the Japanese, who occupied it for fifty years prior to 1945, and by the Chinese mainlanders who fled there and have ruled it since 1949. Moreover, art historians working outside Taiwan have not, with a few exceptions, paid enough attention to painting on Taiwan.<sup>7</sup> It is understandable that both Japanese and Chinese mainlanders would undervalue Taiwan's cultural achievement, for this island has been the object of their imperialistic and colonialistic exploitation. And for Western scholars, mainland China has long been a fascinating realm, full of the myth of otherness; after a long period of isolation, China's brief open-door policy and limited liberalization in the late 1970s and early 1980s further stimulated lay and scholarly interest, as well as producing a number of publications and exhibition catalogues, which are of uneven quality. So little has been published on art in Taiwan that the island is in danger of being misperceived as an economic miracle without culture. The truth is that, during the past four decades, Taiwan has seen the emergence of several important artists who exemplify the rapid cultural and social changes since 1945. Their art results partly from each artist's search for individual expression, partly from the social, political, and economic context of Taiwan. Thus, art in Taiwan since 1945 provides a revealing contrast to that in mainland China since 1949 and offers a fertile field for art-historical research.

Lin Xingyue's *Taiwan maishu jingyun sishinian* is the first book on the development of art (particularly painting) in Taiwan in the four decades since 1945, when Japanese occupation ended. The author is aware of the difficulty of such a major undertaking. The book is illustrated with valuable photographs of many of the artists discussed. The many black-and-white reproductions, though not as clear as one would expect in a book about painting, are helpful nevertheless. One of the most useful features of the book is its attempt to relate the development of painting to contemporary economic and political conditions. For example, the author shows



that cultural politics played an important role in government-sponsored exhibitions and competitions. Many of the jurors were high-ranking officials of the ruling political party and tended to impose a strong conservative influence on painting style; they even went so far as to impose an orthodox style based on traditional Chinese literati ideals and to exclude from competitions paintings similar in style to Japanese *nihonga*. On the other hand, the book also shows that many of the artists born in Taiwan and trained by the Japanese organized their own exhibitions, formed their own groups, and sought to continue the tradition of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism they learned second-hand from their Japanese teachers. Another example of cultural politics is the role played by government censors in the 1950s and early 1960s when the modernist movement exemplified by the Dongfang and the Wuyue Groups was taking shape.<sup>8</sup>

Significantly, the modernist movement in Taiwan in the 1950s and early 1960s shows many affinities with that in mainland China during the post-Cultural Revolution period. It is this kind of opportunity to compare and contrast art in Taiwan and mainland China that makes the group of publications discussed here extremely fruitful for an understanding of modern Chinese art.<sup>9</sup>

### Notes

1. London, 1959.
2. First published in *Jiangsu huakan*, no. 7, 1985; reprinted in *Meishu lunji*, no. 4, 1986, pp. 189–94.
3. For the Lingnan School, see Ralph Croizier, *Art and Revolution in Modern China: The Lingnan (Cantonese) School, 1906–1951*, Berkeley, 1988.
4. For example, Mayching Kao, "China's Response to the West in Art: 1898–1937," Ph. D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1972; Shirley Hsiao-ling Sun, "Lu Hsun and the Chinese Woodcut Movement: 1929–1935," Ph. D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1974.
5. Shanghai, 1984.
6. For a comparative study, see Julia Andrews, "Traditional Painting in New China: *Guohua* and the Anti-Rightist Movement," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, v. 49, no. 3, 1990, pp. 555–85.
7. Among scholars in the West, John Clark is almost alone in his study of art in Taiwan. See for example his articles: "Taiwanese Painting under the Japanese Occupation," *Journal of Oriental Studies*, v. 25, no. 1, 1987, pp. 63–105; "La peinture à Taiwan après 1945: le contexte politique et économique," *Études chinoises*, v. 7, no. 1, 1988, pp. 29–63.
8. For the Wuyue Group, see Chu-ting Li, "The Fifth Moon Group of Taiwan," *The Register of the Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas*, v. 7, no. 3, 1986, pp. 43–54.
9. The most recent discussion of scholarship on modern Chinese painting, Ralph Croizier, "Art and Society in Modern China—A Review Article," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, v. 49, no. 3, 1990, pp. 587–602, does not mention art in Taiwan, thus reinforcing its marginalization by Western scholars for the past four decades.

JASON C. KUO

*Persian Drawings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.* By Marie Lukens Swietochowski and Sussan Babaie. 87 + vii pp., 36 black-and-white illustrations, bibliography. \$7.95.

This is a catalogue of the Metropolitan Museum's best Persian drawings selected for temporary exhibition at the Museum in the fall of 1989. The brief introduction surveys the history, function, and themes of drawings, which are defined as works of art using line as the primary means of graphic expression, although sometimes enhanced by color or color washes. Of the 36 drawings selected, the first two date from the Timurid period in the first half of the fifteenth century, the last one from the Qajar period at the turn of the twentieth century, and the majority (nos. 3–33) from the Safavid period in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The selection accurately reflects the field. The earliest substantial number of drawings on paper, dating from the second half of the fourteenth century, are in albums in Istanbul and Berlin, and a few are preserved from the Timurid period, including a traditional type of decorative drawing (no. 1) and a new type imitating Chinese drawings (no. 2). In the sixteenth century, however, Persian drawings assumed a new role when they began to be created as independent images for albums and signed. The authors establish two broad categories: preparatory drawings, including pounced drawings of single figures (no. 22), vignettes (no. 29), and decorative designs (no. 1), and finished ones meant to be as detailed and finely executed as paintings (no. 7). Each entry has a full-size reproduction, brief documentation, and a descriptive essay including discussion and photographs of comparative material. Within the broad chronological groups, the drawings are arranged thematically around such subjects as huntsmen and warriors, scenes from literature or folk tales (e.g., Majnun in the Wilderness), and single figures. As the drawings lack text or titles, it is sometimes difficult to identify the subject or trace its source. A good example of the problem of interpretation is the popular subject of the emaciated horse (no. 13). The authors note that while it represented the lower self and baser instincts for Sufis and mystics, in some drawings it seems to lack any spiritual intent and instead has a humorous mien, and thus they correctly emphasize the multiplicity of meanings possible in any particular image. Altogether, the volume is a modest and worthwhile introduction to the subject, and one hopes that more of the Museum's vast collection of Islamic art will be published forthwith in a similar format.

SHEILA S. BLAIR

*Hindu Temple Art of Orissa.* By Thomas E. Donaldson. Vol. 1: 8 maps, 12 charts, 8 diagrams, 40 groundplans, and 1237 figures on plates; Vol. 2: 1 Map, 3 charts, 4 diagrams, 22 groundplans, and 1678 figures on plates; Vol. 3: 1465 figures on plates. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985, 1986, 1987. \$514.29.

My bathroom scales are comfortingly inaccurate, but according to them, Thomas E. Donaldson's monumental *Hindu Temple Art of Orissa* weighs in at well over twenty pounds. However, this ponderousness is not because the book is of the familiar "imperial" variety, with large type, huge plates, vast margins, and little to say. The 1438 text pages are crowded with information, while the 4381 excellent photographs, nearly all taken by the author himself, seldom enjoy the luxury of being placed one to the page: often six or seven or eight are reproduced together, an economical arrangement that serves the reader well for following the author's discussions of stylistic and iconographic development. The only

luxury connected with the volumes, other than the impressive effect they make upon a shelf, is their price: \$514.29 for the three volumes. Yet even here one cannot complain too much, considering the major contribution the publisher has made in this handsome and comprehensive production. It is only that few scholars will be able to acquire the volumes for their own private use; and getting them from the library will be a daunting prospect, since it will hardly make sense to take out one volume at a time. The necessary plate descriptions and indices for volumes I and 2 are all in volume 3, while the pictures and discussions of any particular site or temple or related sculptures are distributed throughout all three volumes.

As I shall explain below, it is not only in the matter of weight that Donaldson's study fails to be very "user friendly." Nonetheless, in the ultimate analysis, it deserves the highest commendation: this is a staggering achievement, which will provide a productive base for the study of Orissan temple architecture and sculpture for many decades to come. Starting with the earliest extant remains of the Orissan Hindu temple form in the late sixth century (Lakṣmaṇeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar), the author considers all of the major and a great number of the minor forms over the course of the next thousand years—revealing a remarkably consistent and instructive course of development. In volume 1 and in the first half of volume 2, he describes each temple as a whole, putting each into its historical context insofar as this can be known from documentary records, including the pertinent inscriptions, which often give us less precise information than we would wish. These discussions, succinct and well written, deal typically with the design of the major parts of each temple, its cult imagery, and its characteristic decorative motifs. As the author puts it: "The major objective of this study will be to focus on the overall architectural features and decorative program of temples throughout Orissa in an attempt to refine and improve upon the general trends and chronological sequence established by earlier writers for the temples at Bhubaneswar." The author appropriately uses the precise Sanskrit terms for the various parts of the structures, even though the Orissan terminology often varies from that used elsewhere in India: the glossary, in volume 3, is useful in this regard, just as it is for the identification of the figures and the complex positions they often assume.

The result of the study's Part I—a seven-hundred-fifty-page survey of more than one hundred fifty temples, both in Bhubaneswar and beyond it—is a comprehensive, quite technical, developmental history of architectural and sculptural forms that both honored tradition and yet kept on changing. This process of change must have been constantly propelled by the desires of the artists, as well as the patrons, to seek new shapes and solutions, but it always took place within the context of the tradition. The authority with which the author speaks comes not only from his creditable compulsion both to consider and include every temple in his survey but also from his equal interest in every detail of style and iconography. He is interested not only in the figures but in the ornament too, insisting that the latter is both necessary and auspicious and in this sense highly functional. There appears to be little in this region that the author has not studied and photographed (with great precision, in both cases) so that now, preeminently in this field, he knows whereof he speaks. He has cut through many of the problems long associated with the development of Orissan temples by eschewing any great concern about assigning temples to particular dynasties, even though that will remain as a valid project for a later date or for some other scholar. Nor does he depend too much upon overworked but undependable developmental criteria such as the silhouette of the temple spire, or the character of its juncture with the *jagamohana* (*mandapa*), factors that have been overly utilized in the past.

Part II, the second half of Donaldson's study, which starts midway through volume 2, deals with "Stylistic Evolution and Iconographic Peculiarities of Select Features and Motifs." The first portion of this part involves a concentrated comparative/chronological study of often highly sculpted architectural features such as the *deul* (the Orissan term for the sanctuary proper), the *jagamohana* (the hall in front of the sanctum), door frames, pillars, and the like. The final portion focuses in detail upon aspects of imagery, starting with Śaivite (including Śakta) images, both main and subsidiary; it then proceeds to a study of Viṣṇu, Brahmā, and other gods, and finally focuses upon female figures, erotic motifs (often merged with the latter), narrative friezes, animal figures, and scrolls. All of these discussions, which depend upon or else define the chronological development of the motifs in question, are thoroughly illustrated with details from the various temples.

The author's whole study is as modestly presented as it is vast in scope. He by no means is aiming to transform our view of medieval Indian architecture on the basis of this study. Indeed, the compartmentalized character of the book—moving from temple to temple and from motif to motif—tends to discourage the sweep of generalization in any case. Seeming to worry more about coverage than concepts, he states in the preface—perhaps with more generosity of spirit than conviction—that "there are, I am sure, sites that I have not visited so that, though encyclopedic in appearance, this undertaking is not totally comprehensive and can at best serve as a sourcebook which may inspire others to study and refine upon the framework which I have developed, just as I have been inspired by, and have attempted to broaden and refine upon, the work of my predecessors."

The author's modesty serves us inadequately, however, in the much-argued matter of the authenticity of the recently published palm-leaf chronicle dealing with the building operations of the great Sun Temple at Konārak under Narasimha I (A.D. 1238–64). (See Boner, Alice, Sadasiva Rath Sarma, and Rajendra Prasad Das, *New Light on the Sun Temple of Konāraka*, Varanasi, 1972.) This purported ancient record (or recension of an ancient record) is filled with textual as well as pictorial information which, if reliable, certainly deserves reproduction in a comprehensive study such as this. But Donaldson leaves the reader relatively uninformed about the content of the fascinating document, perhaps because—although he implies belief in it—he has too many misgivings about it. This is to be regretted, because with his special credentials, his opinion would be particularly valuable.

Donaldson is far more specifically informative about another much-argued matter relating to Orissan temples—the meaning of the erotic imagery that appears in abundance upon nearly every shrine that he considers. Indeed, as he states, the inclusion of such imagery was apparently obligatory, and "apparently had the sanction of the sacred texts." Erotic imagery, he insists, "as in the case of other decorative motifs, serves the same auspicious function and likewise may be either propitious or apotropaic, or both." In the noted case of the Surya Deul at Konārak, which has "more *maithuna* themes than any other temple in India," he feels that the evolving popularity of Tantrism, added to the ancient predilection for sexual motifs in any case, must explain the particular abundance. He credits the current Sahajiya belief in the possibility or desirability of transforming sexual emotion into spiritual ecstasy as a particular contributing factor. By contrast, he gives no credence at all to the sometimes desperate spate of explanations so often found in books seeking as much to expose as to explain such imagery: that they were to test one's chastity, to increase the birthrate, to educate the unpracticed, to attract one to the temple, to show the activities of the devadasis, and so forth. His long section on "Female Imagery" and on "Erotic Motifs" (pp. 1152–69, and figures, and descriptions, 3912–4155), dedicated to establish-



ing his conviction that "every image carved on the temple . . . is an essential unit in the overall decorative program and serves both to beautify and protect the temple" is a splendid and learned explanation and justification of the place of this once "notorious" imagery in the very life of the temple itself.

Despite my deep admiration for Donaldson's achievement, it is necessary to complain about one fundamental problem that every reader will inevitably confront. This is the seemingly perverse and total omission of any reference whatsoever to any of the 4381 figures in the text—a text which, being highly specific, constantly cries out for such essential encumbrances. Admittedly, after a very confusing start in volume 1, the pictures in each volume generally parallel the text, but it is a labor of love, constantly attended by despair, to try to keep one's place, working back and forth among the three heavy volumes. Furthermore, there seems to be no convenient way to find what sculptures, in Part II, go with the temples or sites described in Part I; one must either leaf through hundreds of figures or else look up dozens of references in the photographic index. To find the text passage where the particular sculpture is discussed takes yet another complicated search; there are, for instance, between one hundred and two hundred index entries for each of the major gods and for each of the major temples, with no subdivisions to make the hunt easier.

These problems are parodied, as it were, in the very first illustration that the reader will see, a handsome detail from the *jagamohana* of the Paraśurāmeśvara Temple in Bhubaneswar, reproduced on the front cover of the first volume in the triad. Eluding identification by not being identified anywhere, it further insures itself against such efforts by being printed backwards. However, even to mention this lapse seems ungracious, for in truth the publisher has done an impressive job indeed, fully worthy of the author's great undertaking.

WALTER M. SPINK







# ARS ORIENTALIS

XXI





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## CONTENTS

### ARTICLES

- |   |  |     |
|---|--|-----|
| M. B. GARRISON. . . . .<br><i>Trinity University</i>                  | Seals and the Elite at Persepolis: Some Observations<br>on Early Achaemenid Persian Art. . . . . | 1   |
| JUDITH LERNER. . . . .<br><i>New York, New York</i>                   | A Rock Relief of Fath 'Alī Shāh in Shiraz. . . . .   | 31  |
| VIDYA DEHEJIA. . . . .<br><i>Columbia University</i>                  | Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems. . . . .   | 45  |
| WALTER M. SPINK. . . . .<br><i>University of Michigan</i>             | The Archaeology of Ajanīā. . . . .   | 67  |
| AUDREY SPIRO. . . . .<br><i>University of California, Los Angeles</i> | Shaping the Wind: Taste and Tradition in Fifth-Century South China . . . . .                     | 95  |
| YASSER TABBAA. . . . .<br><i>University of Michigan</i>               | The Transformation of Arabic Writing: Part I, Qur'ānic Calligraphy . . . . .                     | 119 |

### BOOK REVIEWS

- |  |  |     |
|--|--|-----|
| CHRISTINE M. E. GUTH. . . . .<br><i>Hopewell, New Jersey</i>   | <i>Japonisme Comes to America: The Japanese Impact on the Graphic Arts 1876–1925</i> , by<br>Julia Meech and Gabriel P. Weisberg; <i>The Japan Idea: Art and Life in Victorian<br/>America</i> , by William Hosley . . . . . | 149 |
| CATHERINE B. ASHER. . . . .<br><i>University of Minnesota</i>  | <i>Mughal Architecture: An Outline of Its History and Developments</i> , by Ebba Koch. . . . .   | 150 |
| FREDERICK M. ASHER. . . . .<br><i>University of Minnesota</i>  | <i>Leaves from the Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th–12th Centuries) and Its<br/>International Legacy</i> , by Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington. . . . .  | 151 |
| HOLLY EDWARDS. . . . .<br><i>Williams College</i>              | <i>Taj Mahal: The Illuminated Tomb: An Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Mughal<br/>and European Documentary Sources</i> , by W. E. Begley and Z. A. Desai . . . . .  | 152 |
| COLIN MACKENZIE. . . . .<br><i>Yale University Art Gallery</i> | <i>Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections</i> , by Jessica Rawson . . . . .  | 153 |





# SEALS AND THE ELITE AT PERSEPOLIS: SOME OBSERVATIONS ON EARLY ACHAEMENID PERSIAN ART

BY M. B. GARRISON

## *Introduction*

THE ACHAEMENID PERSIAN EMPIRE (CA. 550–331 B.C.) WAS founded by Cyrus II (the Great) in the area of southwest Iran and lower Mesopotamia known commonly as Babylonia. At its greatest extent, under Darius I (521–486 B.C.), the empire stretched from the Indus River across Egypt, incorporating much of the Greek-speaking world of western Asia. The people of this vast empire, the largest the world had ever known, spoke a wide variety of languages and practiced many different religious and social customs. Although of great importance in antiquity, the cultural, social, political, and economic history of the Achaemenid Persian empire is poorly documented, its main sources being Greek authors (especially Aeschylus, Herodotus, Xenophon, and Ctesias), who often preserve a biased view of the empire and who almost always got their information secondhand. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Western scholars promoted and expanded this Hellenocentric approach to the study of the Persian empire in their own romantic attempts to elevate the achievements of the Greeks.<sup>1</sup>

The study of Achaemenid Persian culture, especially its art, also occupies an awkward place in the canon of historical periodization as traditionally taught in academic settings. For the Near Eastern art historian the period is often overlooked, since it falls at the very end of the ancient Near Eastern spectrum, where its historical sources are usually Greek and where certain stylistic idioms in the art suggest contact with the Greek world.<sup>2</sup> For these same reasons Greek art historians have often concluded that Achaemenid Persian art is a poor provincial hybridization of Greek art. This situation has slowly begun to change: several recent studies have attempted to evaluate Achaemenid Persian culture from a center-oriented Achaemenid perspective rather than a periphery-oriented Greek perspective.<sup>3</sup>

The study of Achaemenid Persian art has been hampered by an almost complete lack of freestanding stone and metal sculpture and the low survival rate of securely provenanced small-scale artifacts, such as metal vases and figurines. The imperial capitals of Pasargadae and especially Persepolis preserve important samples of monumental architectural relief; those from Persepolis have traditionally formed the founda-

tion for any discussion of Achaemenid art.

Nevertheless, we do have access to another category of material that promises to enrich discussion of Achaemenid Persian art. Glyptic art preserves the richest source of representational imagery from the ancient Near East of all periods and cultural contexts. Because seals were used in the ancient Near East to ratify transactions and documents and to secure property, they were owned by a wide variety of individuals and institutions. Seals and the clay tablets (written in various cuneiform scripts) upon which they were applied were ubiquitous features of Near Eastern cultures, and they represent the two most distinctive aspects of it in the archaeological record.<sup>4</sup> The study of seals and seal impressions from earlier periods has provided the framework in art historical studies for recognizing the development of period styles. This is because seals and their ancient impressions (sealings) survive by the thousands (unlike any other type of representational artifact from the Near East) and because they document style and imagery for every historical period. Seals that survive through their impressions on clay administrative and economic tablets are especially informative. The transactions (and hence date of the seal's use) can often be dated very closely through the date formulae in the tablet text; sealings that occur on these tablets may also be linked to specific individuals mentioned in the tablet texts, individuals whose identity may be known from other tablet texts in the archive and/or other historical sources. Recent trends in glyptic research have also stressed the importance of seals in elucidating problems of social history.<sup>5</sup>

## *New Evidence from Persepolis and Its Impact on the Study of Achaemenid Persian Art*

Although large numbers of actual seals dating to the Achaemenid period are extant, few have been found in controlled excavations or can be dated with certainty. A small, but important, archive of sealed tablet texts from the Treasury at Persepolis, known as the Persepolis Treasury Tablets, has been published.<sup>6</sup> The tablets date from late in the reign of Darius to the early years of Artaxerxes I, 492–458 B.C. The seal



impressions, although limited in number and probably dated over the entire period covered by the tablets, have provided until now the only evidence for Achaemenid glyptic at the center of the empire.

Another, much larger, archive of sealed administrative documents was excavated at Persepolis in 1933–34 by The Oriental Institute. A selection of texts from the archive, known today as the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, was published in 1969 and 1978 by Richard Hallock.<sup>7</sup> The date formulae preserved on many of the tablet texts demonstrate that the archive dates from the thirteenth through the twenty-eighth years of Darius I (509–494 B.C.). The seal impressions preserved on this archive number into the thousands and represent over a thousand individual seals, thus making it one of the largest archives of sealed administrative documents in the ancient Near East. Because initial research on this archive was geared toward the translation of the texts, the study and publication of the seal impressions are still in progress.<sup>8</sup> The wealth of material they preserve is generally unknown.

These seal impressions will bring fresh insights into the discussion of Achaemenid Persian art, religion, and social custom. Not since the discovery of the monumental relief sculpture from Persepolis has such a large body of material come to light. The seal designs preserved in this corpus constitute the largest known source of representational imagery for Achaemenid Persian art. This representational imagery is richly varied and includes not only many of the scenes encountered in the traditional repertoire of Near Eastern glyptic art but also some new and unique designs. The seal impressions also preserve (somewhat surprisingly, see below, pp. 3–20) a wide range of styles. The representational imagery and styles preserved in the seal impressions will radically redefine our conception of early Achaemenid glyptic.

The impressions on the Fortification Tablets are all related through their occurrence in the same archive, which was excavated under controlled conditions and is well dated by the date formulae in the tablet texts. The officials to whom the seals belonged represent a wide range of social classes and performed a wide variety of functions in the administrative system; in addition, some of the officials belonged to the highest circles of the elite at the court and are also known from Achaemenid royal inscriptions and the Greek historical sources (including even the Great King himself). The fact that we can often identify a seal with its owner opens many exciting possibilities for the exploration of the relation between seal owners and the style and representational imagery of their seals. Thus, these seal impressions represent a unique source not only for tradi-

tional art historical inquiry but also for research into questions surrounding the social history of art. Opportunities for such close analysis of mechanisms and implications of artistic patronage are extremely rare in ancient art of any culture.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, the site from which the tablets come, Persepolis, was an imperial capital at the center of the empire. Thus, seal styles and imagery should reflect, and so establish, the norm for artistic and representational tastes at the center of the empire. The importance of these styles and images is heightened by the fact that the seal impressions date to a critical time in the formation and canonization of Achaemenid Persian art and culture during the reign of Darius the Great.

### *Goals of the Present Inquiry*

Thus, the range of research possibilities for the seal impressions preserved on the Fortification archive is vast. In this study I will explore the main stylistic movements documented in the seal impressions and in the process raise some interesting issues concerning artistic patronage. Questions concerning iconography, which deserve detailed treatment, will be dealt with elsewhere.<sup>10</sup> Rather than randomly selecting individual seals to represent certain styles, I have elected to focus upon seven seals, which are related by their occurrence on a very specific type of transaction. This contextual approach not only provides a meaningful entry into the material, but it also will allow me to explore issues in the social history of art, since we may compare the imagery and style selected by a group of highly placed individuals intimately associated with the court; some of these individuals may have been connected by familial ties, and all of them moved within a very restricted circle of administrative activity. These individuals probably saw one another regularly and could recognize and appreciated the imagery and style of their companions' seals (or the seals they were using; see below, p. 3). I think it likely that they may even have discussed the imagery and style of their seals or at least recognized the shared characteristics or novelties of those designs. These seven seals do not reflect the complete range of style and imagery preserved in the entire corpus of seal impressions; nevertheless, they do provide a convenient vantage point from which to survey the major trends in the complete corpus.

The specific issues I will address in this article are: 1) the sources of inspiration in the early formative years of Achaemenid art during the reign of Darius the Great; 2) the availability of antique imagery to the

Achaemenid Persian patron in the form of both antique seals and archaizing imagery and style; 3) the nature of official Achaemenid Court Style glyptic, its sources of inspiration, its formal qualities, and its larger meaning within the context of official court art of the Achaemenid empire under Darius; and 4) some aspects of patron choice at private and official levels. This study is in many ways preliminary in nature; only when the whole corpus of seal impressions from Persepolis has been published and subjected to detailed analyses on all levels may we come to make definitive statements on the issues explored here.

### *Background: The J Texts from the Fortification Archive*

The Fortification Tablets were discovered in the fortification wall at the northeast corner of the Persepolis terrace in two small chambers, which may have been archival rooms.<sup>11</sup> They record disbursements of foodstuffs from royal storehouses to various levels of administrators, agricultural workers, artists, courtiers, priests, and members of the royal family in the regions of Fars and Elam in the years 509–494 B.C.<sup>12</sup> Many of the tablets carry date formulae, often specific as to month and day of the transaction. In general, commodities are paid out to individuals and groups on a fixed-ration system, the amount of rations determined by need and an individual's status. The seals of the officials and offices mentioned in the texts are commonly impressed on the tablets. The status of these individuals within the system can often be determined by their duties in that system and by the amount of commodities they are issued as rations. Several of the personages are also known from other historical sources, both Greek and Persian. The archive was written almost exclusively in cuneiform Elamite, the language of the political predecessors of the Persians in southwest Iran, the Elamites; the Achaemenids adopted this language for certain types of administrative recording in the early years of their rule in southwest Iran.<sup>13</sup>

One group of texts (J Texts) from the Fortification archive represents a special type of transaction preserved on a relatively small number of texts (fifty-three identified to date).<sup>14</sup> These texts are distinguished by the use of the phrases "dispensed before the king" and "dispensed in behalf of the king." In some cases a member of the royal family takes the place of the king. The transactions are also notable for the exalted status of many of the individuals

mentioned in the texts and for the sometimes extraordinarily large quantity of foodstuffs involved. The following example of a J Text transaction as recorded in PF 702 is characteristic of the group:

1,783 BAR [of] flour, supplied by Irmada, was dispensed in behalf of the king. [At] Anzamannakka. In the 21st year. Karakka and Midasa received [it], total 2 grain handlers.

The exact meaning of the phrase "dispensed in behalf of the king" is unclear, but Hallock suggests that the king may have actually been present at the places where the transactions occurred.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, these texts may not record transactions *per se* but, rather, lists of commodities consumed during the king's travels.<sup>16</sup> Other J Texts dealing with wine or beer replace *ma-ak-ka* (dispensed) with *ki-ut-ka* (expended), again suggesting consumption, not storage or payments. These rations are often extraordinarily large. In PF 702, the 1,783 BAR of flour represent a day's ration (1½ QA) for 11,886 persons.<sup>17</sup> PF 701 records 12,610 BAR of flour! Two grain handlers were also required for that massive shipment. PF 2034 documents 1,333 fowls (some quite exotic). Rare commodities include *ma-du-uk-ka* (salt?), *ba-nu-ra*, and *ra-zi*. The last two commodities occur only in the J Texts and have unknown meanings.

The J Texts are further demarcated by a consistent pattern of seal use. Only seven seals are used to secure the transactions: PFS 7\*, PFS 66\*, and PFS 93\* applied as office seals; PFS 51, PFS 38, PFS 2, and PFS 859\* all used as personal seals.<sup>18</sup> The office seals PFS 7\*, PFS 66\*, and PFS 93\* occur only on the J Texts. They clearly represent offices that deal only in these special transactions. PFS 859\* also appears only on the J Texts, under somewhat unusual circumstances.<sup>19</sup>

In the following discussion I will present these seven seals according to their stylistic qualities, examining the issues of both style and composition they raise. I group certain seals together owing to shared stylistic features. In a few instances other seals from the Fortification archive that do not occur on the J Texts are introduced in order to clarify or expand upon observations evoked by the J Text seals.

### *"Neo-Elamite" Heirlooms: PFS 93\* and PFS 51*

The style and imagery of PFS 93\* and PFS 51 clearly show that they belong to a class of seal carving traditionally identified as "Neo-Elamite." This style has been localized at Susa in southwestern Iran and dated to the period immediately





FIG. 1. PFS 93\* on PF 694.



FIG. 2. Line drawing of collated image of PFS 93\* (L. Sterner).

preceding Achaemenid rule there (known also as the late Neo-Elamite period). In the case of PFS 93\*, the inscription on the seal also indicates its early date.

PFS 93\* (figs. 1–2) occurs only on the J Texts, representing an office that ratifies transactions concerning the delivery of cattle “dispensed before the king.”<sup>20</sup> The seal, mentioned briefly in several publications, is the famous heirloom of the grandfather of Cyrus the Great.<sup>21</sup>

On PFS 93\* a warrior on horseback at far left pursues a figure on foot at far right. The horseman wears a knee-length garment and a cap. He brandishes a spear above his head in his right hand, while his left hand appears to hold the reins of his mount, which charges ahead in a flying gallop. The pursued figure, wearing a short garment, moves away to the right. His garment carries two decorative bands at the lower hem. He has already been pierced by a spear through the waist. He turns his head back toward his mounted foe, and, as an act of submission, offers up in his right hand his own bow and empty quiver. Below the horseman lie two dead enemies, stacked one above the other. As preserved, these figures seem to be nude. These two figures, as well as the one on foot, show deep striations in their close-cropped hair. The paneled Elamite inscription, acting as a terminal, reads:

[v. k]u-raš

h. an-za-

an-x-

ra DUMU

še-iš-be-

iš-n[a]

“Cyrus the Anshanite, son of Teispes”

Although a matter of some debate, the grandfather of Cyrus the Great has been identified with a vassal king of the Assyrian king Assurbanipal.<sup>22</sup> This Cyrus the Anshanite controlled the formerly Elamite holding of Anshan northeast of Susa.

The other “Neo-Elamite” heirloom, PFS 51 (figs. 3–4), is a personal seal belonging to the woman Irdabama.<sup>23</sup> She is known only from the Fortification archive; as Hallock remarks, however, she must certainly be a member of the royal family.<sup>24</sup> She uses her personal seal, PFS 51, on six J Texts.<sup>25</sup> She also seals two other published transactions in the Fortification archive with PFS 51. In PFa 27 she acts as an addressor in a letter, dispensing grain from her unnamed estate.<sup>26</sup> Her seal occurs on PF 1185 ratifying a special ration (M Texts), although she is not mentioned by name in the text.

The exalted social and administrative position of Irdabama accounts for the occurrence of her personal seal in the J Texts. As a member of the royal family, she could expect certain privileges. This is reflected in the T Texts (letters) in the Fortification Tablets, where Irdabama and the queen Irtašduna (using PFS 38, see below, pp. 7–10) are the only women who address letters. Both also seem to have work groups under their control and manage large estates from which they issue rations. They have a special status within the Fortification archive, which seems to allow them the authority to draw upon special royal provisions. In fact, Irtašduna and Irdabama are the only individuals to take the place of the king in the J Texts. These transactions are ratified with the personal seals of these individuals rather than the office seals PFS 7\*, PFS 66\*, and PFS 93\*. This seems to indicate that those offices have been bypassed and that the rations have been issued on the women’s personal authority.<sup>27</sup>

PFS 51 might well be a companion piece to PFS 93\*.<sup>28</sup> A figure on horseback at far left hunts wild animals. He brandishes a spear above his head in his right hand, while with his left hand he holds the reins of his stallion, which charges ahead to the right in a flying gallop. The horseman wears a knee-length garment, which is belted at the waist. He also wears a headdress that is serrated along the upper edge, giving the effect of a dentate crown. From the back of

the headdress his hair emerges in a baggy chignon. Before him two wild animals, placed one above the other in the field, gallop away to the right. Each has been struck in the back with a pommeled spear.

Like PFS 93\* (figs. 1–2), PFS 51 is a beautifully cut design from the hand of a master engraver. Not only are the figures rendered with assurance and flair, but PFS 51 preserves a bit of three-dimensionality not often attempted even in the most naturalistic periods of Mesopotamian glyptic. The artist has carefully rendered the forward right leg of the horseman as well as indicating the upper part of the left thigh and the hem of the short behind the right leg. The overall effect is a bold rendering of spatial depth and foreshortening.

PFS 93\* and PFS 51 also share many compositional and stylistic features and most probably come from the same workshop. Both seals employ the theme of the mounted horseman at far left pursuing his prey at far right. In the case of PFS 93\*, the prey are human; in PFS 51, animal. Both scenes have airy compositions, where each figure or group of figures is isolated in space. They both also use the convention of stacked figures (the dead enemy under the horsemen of PFS 93\* and the fleeing animals in PFS 51). This particular convention is quite arresting, even for the normally active and free-flowing compositions often seen in this style of glyptic. Rather than evoking reminiscences of glyptic tradition, it calls to mind similar arrangements of figures in monumental wall reliefs from the Nineveh palace of Assurbanipal.<sup>29</sup> This shared compositional scheme may indicate active transfer of artistic motifs between southwestern Iran and Assyria in the seventh century B.C. Finally, the poses of the horsemen and their mounts on PFS 93\* and PFS 51 are very similar to each other, and all the animals are shown in a flying gallop.

The similarity between the two seals in terms of composition extends to style as well. In both we see schematic human figures, simply rendered in smooth forms, with very large heads. Modeling is controlled, achieved through the use of small, compact masses of slightly swelling musculature. This occurs mainly in the large, barrel-shaped animal bodies; human and animal appendages are thin and brittle. The mounts in both scenes have strong, majestic chests and necks. The marked transition between the hindquarters and the bodies of the equids seen in PFS 51 does not occur on the animal forms of PFS 93\*. The human forms on PFS 93\* seem more carefully rendered, and the animals are somewhat larger and heavier. In PFS 93\* the large human heads sit on long, thin necks, while in PFS 51 the neck is indicated only by a slight triangular swelling of flesh. Both seals show the typical “Neo-

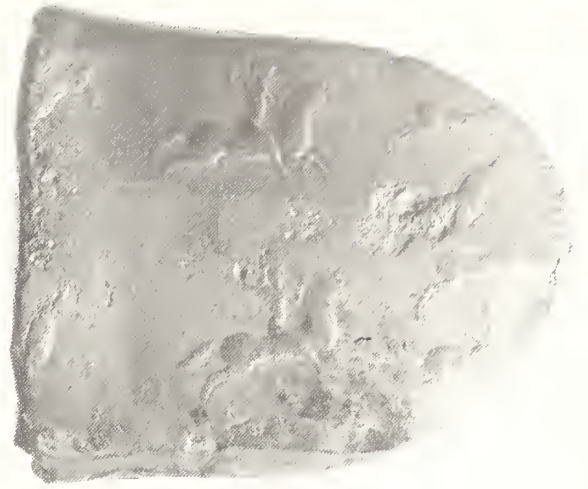


FIG. 3. PFS 51 on PF 736.

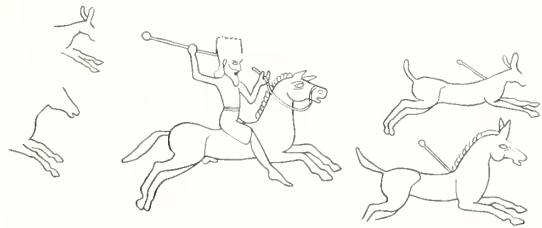


FIG. 4. Line drawing of collated image of PFS 51 (L. Sterner).

Elamite” qualities of thin waists, a slight bow at the lower backs, and soft, puffy shoulders. Thighs and calves swell in large, undifferentiated masses.

As the only securely dated artifact from the pre-empire period, PFS 93\* (and by extension its companion PFS 51) is crucial for articulating the sources of stylistic inspiration for Achaemenid art before the reign of Darius. Amiet, in his important discussion of the so-called Neo-Elamite seals, remarks that PFS 93\* shows a strong connection to the small corpus of “Neo-Elamite” seals from the Acropolis at Susa.<sup>30</sup> The date and style of the Susa sealings have been the focus of much discussion.<sup>31</sup> To this writer it seems clear that both series of seal impressions from Susa preserve a wide range of styles. Some continue Modeled Style traditions from Assyria and Babylonia<sup>32</sup> or variations upon that tradition;<sup>33</sup> others seem to document a distinctive style of glyptic closely related to that seen on PFS 93\* and PFS 51.<sup>34</sup> This style has traditionally been traced to Susa and labeled “Neo-Elamite.” A select few of the seals associated with the “Neo-Elamite” style stand apart from the run-of-the-mill products, owing to the high quality of their engraving and their rich modeling. The royal heirlooms PFS 93\* and





FIG. 5. "Neo-Elamite" seal in the Pierpont Morgan Collection. From E. Porada, *Corpus of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in North American Collections*, The Collection of the Pierpont Morgan Library I (New York: Pantheon Books, 1948), no. 812. Courtesy Edith Porada.

PFS 51 are by far the most carefully engraved of these seals and represent the style at its finest. With these two seals might be included a few others of high quality: two of the Susa Palace of Darius sealings, as well as unprovenanced seals in the Pierpont Morgan Collection (fig. 5), in Brussels, and in a private collection in Tehran.<sup>35</sup>

The specific stylistic features of this "Neo-Elamite" style include at times schematic human figures, simply rendered in smooth forms, with very large heads. Modeling is controlled, achieved through the use of small, compact masses of slightly swelling musculature. The human figure has a distinctive shape: chests are triangular, waists thin, and thighs and calves swell in large, undifferentiated masses. The shoulders and arms often have a puffy appearance, giving the whole of the upper body a soft, sometimes disjointed look. Animal form is elongated, with sharply differentiated hindquarters, large barrel-shaped bodies, strong chests and necks, and thin, brittle appendages. Compositionally, the style prefers scenes with much movement, usually left to right in the rolled impression, and figures, both animal and human, in action poses. Compositions are also light and airy, with much space between figures and little or no overlapping of figures. The hunt from horseback seems especially popular,<sup>36</sup> as do the hunt from chariot<sup>37</sup> and the kneeling archer.<sup>38</sup> Animal studies and intertwined animals and monstrous creatures round out the main themes in this style.<sup>39</sup>

The visual qualities of this "Neo-Elamite" style, as well as the themes associated with it, are reflected in an important group of seal impressions found in the Fortification Tablets, probably made toward the middle and end of the sixth century B.C. Similar stylistic features and compositional elements of the "Neo-Elamite" style are also found in some seals cut in the local Fortification Style. The Fortification Style is by far the numerically most significant style found in

the Fortification archive. Seals cut in this style represent an important group of local workshops (see below, pp. 10–12).

It seems striking that PFS 93\*, one of the best examples of the "Neo-Elamite" style, carries an inscription naming an early Achaemenid king. PFS 51, which must come from the same workshop and is also a seal of exceptional quality, is used in the late sixth century B.C. by an Achaemenid royal woman of very high rank at Persepolis. In addition, many seals on the Fortification Tablets in the late sixth century B.C. at Persepolis are clearly inspired by this "Neo-Elamite" style. Large numbers of seals from the local Fortification Style also have ties to this tradition, which might better be identified not as "Neo-Elamite" but rather as "Neo-Achaemenid" or "Early Persian." Indeed, the evidence strongly suggests that this style has more direct connections to early Persian art and historical figures than to late Neo-Elamite art. The Susa sealings provide an Elamite context for the style, but Susa was at all periods a very cosmopolitan city. Thus, seals of early Persian inspiration would be likely to occur in its archaeological debris.<sup>40</sup> The Susa sealings as a whole reflect a mixed bag of stylistic traditions; until now, one of these styles has been singled out as "Neo-Elamite" because it occurs only at Susa.<sup>41</sup> That style does not, however, document the continuation of a recognizable Neo-Elamite style of the early first millennium preserved in seals found at Susa. Interestingly, the one seal that carries a royal name inscription of a late Neo-Elamite king is rendered in a style closely related to Modeled Style traditions from *Assyria* and *Babylonia*.<sup>42</sup> PFS 93\*, on the other hand, ties the "Early Persian" style to a specific historical figure of the Achaemenid Persian family, while PFS 51 links the style to another high-ranking member of that family. The many other sealings from Persepolis that show direct and indirect influence of the early style represented by PFS 93\* and PFS 51 associate the style intimately with the Persian heartland. Hence the bulk of the evidence argues that this style be most closely identified with the early Persians.<sup>43</sup>

The presence of PFS 93\* and PFS 51 in the corpus of seals preserved on the Fortification Tablets vividly documents a long and active history of seal usage among the Achaemenid elite.<sup>44</sup> PFS 93\* and PFS 51 were probably valued heirlooms for the Achaemenid family, objects that had been passed down for several generations. The fact that PFS 51 belonged to a member of the royal family (perhaps even a queen), and the fact that PFS 93\* carries a royal inscription naming an early ruler from the same family, may even suggest that the official(s) who staffed the

office represented by PFS 93\* was also a member(s) of the royal family.

The close stylistic and compositional ties between PFS 93\* and PFS 51, their occurrence on a very restricted type of transaction, and the high quality of their carving indicate that, together with a few other "Early Perisan" seals (see above, pp. 5–6), they were perhaps consciously selected and preserved for their strong personal appeal within the royal family. These similarities between the two seals—in addition to the way they stand apart from other "Early Persian" seals—also suggest that they are the product of one workshop. Already, then, we see among the early members of the Achaemenid elite a pattern of artistic patronage. The survival of these earlier seals into a later period and their use by members of the royal family cannot be fortuitous but, rather, must mark the remembrance of that earlier period of patronage. Not surprisingly, we can document at a time contemporary to the two women and the Fortification Tablets a similar pattern of royal patronage of select workshops and artists in the royally mandated Court Style (below, pp. 13–20).

Despite their age, the two seals have left some of the clearest impressions among the whole of the archive. The availability of these sealings, as well as the seals themselves, to artists in the late sixth and early fifth centuries B.C. must have played an important role in the renewal of antique imagery and style seen in the seal impressions on the Fortification Tablets. They stand as vivid examples of how antique imagery could be, and was, passed down into later periods.<sup>45</sup> These traditions would also have been actively preserved in the seal workshops, where stylistic idiom was handed down father to son, master to apprentice.<sup>46</sup>

### *Archaizing Imagery and Style: PFS 38*

In PF 730–31, 733–34, and 2035 commodities are "dispensed for(?)" or "in behalf of [the woman] Irtašduna," and in PF 732 commodities are "expended in behalf of [the woman] Irtašduna." All the transactions are sealed by her personal seal, PFS 38 (figs. 6–7).<sup>47</sup> Irtašduna is a wife of Darius.<sup>48</sup> Herodotos (VII 69.2) knows her as Artystone and says that she was the daughter of Cyrus and the favorite wife of Darius. She also uses her seal PFS 38 on five letters (T Texts, PF 1835–39), where she acts as an addressor, issuing rations of wine. In three instances these are quite large rations (110 marris) drawn from her estates at Mirandu (PF 1835) and Kuknaka (PF 1836–37).<sup>49</sup> In PF 733–34 wine is dispensed in behalf of Irtašduna and her son Arsames.<sup>50</sup> They appear to-

gether also in PF 2035, where beer is expended on their behalf. As mentioned (above, p. 4), Irtašduna and Irdabama are the only individuals to take the place of the king in the J Texts, probably owing to their exalted social rank.

PFS 38 (figs. 6–7) preserves an elaborate version of the heroic encounter in a richly carved Modeled Style.<sup>51</sup> A hero, facing proper left, grasps two rampant, winged, horned, human-headed bulls by a foreleg. The hero has a squared beard that rests over the left shoulder; a thick mass of hair bunches at the back of the neck. From the top of his head emerge some sprays, perhaps a type of headdress. He wears an elaborately decorated version of an Assyrian-type garment, which leaves the forward leg exposed; a dagger sheath projects from the back of the waist. The upper part of the garment carries a series of parallel vertical lines on the right side of the torso and a series of parallel diagonal lines on the left side of the torso; these diagonal lines are carried down onto the lower part of the garment. In the field between the hero and the creature to proper left, there are traces of a figure directly below the lower hoof of the creature (perhaps a frontal nude female?), a rod-like device with



FIG. 6. PFS 38 on PF 1835.



FIG. 7. Line drawing of collated image of PFS 38 (L. Sterner).



thickened ends to either side of the figure, a rhombus, and a forked device (in the upper field). Above the upper wing of the creature to proper right are seven dots (a horizontal line of three dots above a horizontal line of four dots). In the lower field of this vertical zone, there are traces of what appears to be an incense burner. As a terminal there is an elaborate stylized plant device consisting of two superimposed bowls from which emerge vegetal sprays (apparently lilies), some of which hang over the sides of the bowls; petals emerge from the center of the bowls. Another set of petals occurs below the lowest preserved bowl, indicating that there may originally have been another bowl at the base of the device. Over the upper bowl are the torso and head of a male figure contained within a double circle from which radiate rays ending in star bursts. The figure within the disk faces proper left and extends both hands to proper left; in the upper hand he appears to hold a plume-like device (palm frond, fly whisk, or large feather?), which extends upward to proper left. He appears to wear a polos-type headdress.

The seal belongs stylistically with a relatively large group of seals from the Fortification Tablets showing close ties to earlier seal-carving traditions from the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods (fig. 8).<sup>52</sup> This Neo-Assyrian/Neo-Babylonian style is usually labeled the "Modeled Style" and has long been recognized as an important glyptic tradition. Little work has been done, however, to articulate fully the formal characteristics of the style in either the Neo-Assyrian or the Neo-Babylonian periods.<sup>53</sup> The seal impressions from the Fortification Tablets document the continuation, in a slightly modified form, of this Modeled Style tradition in the Achaemenid context.<sup>54</sup> The Persepolitan Modeled Style shares the tall figures and large, modeled volumes, but generally

the musculature is not as hard, nor the detailing as elaborate, as the earlier Modeled Style of Assyria and Babylonia. PFS 38 stands closer to the older tradition in the elaborate treatment of the hero's garment (the hard linearity and exact pattern of the decoration find no parallel, however, in the Assyro-Babylonian Modeled Style), the seven dots representing the Pleiades, and the rhombus in the field.<sup>55</sup> The elaborate plant device is found on Assyrian seals, but it also frequently occurs in the ivories from Nimrud that have been associated with a "southern tradition" of ivory carving from Syria-Palestine.<sup>56</sup> If there is in fact a frontal nude female, this figure would also connect the design to earlier seal-carving traditions in Syria.<sup>57</sup> The subdued use of modeling in both human and animal forms and the soft, fluffy treatment of the three rows of feathers on the wings of the creatures place the seal in the Persepolitan context.

The overall stylistic qualities of PFS 38 belong, then, with the Persepolitan Modeled Style, which clearly draws inspiration from earlier Mesopotamian seal-carving traditions. The iconography of PFS 38 draws upon not only Assyrian but also Syrian precedents.

A most interesting aspect of PFS 38 is the fact that, even at a time when we know that the official Court Style in seal art had appeared in its fully developed form (see below, pp. 13–20), the queen Irtašduna chose a figural style with archaizing allusions to Assyrian art. She was not alone, for the Fortification Tablets preserve the seals of many high-ranking individuals whose preferences leaned toward the older



FIG. 8. Neo-Assyrian Modeled Style seal in the British Museum (89145). Courtesy Trustees of the British Museum.



FIG. 9. PFS 9\* on PF 659.



FIG. 10. Line drawing of collated image of PFS 9\* (L. Sterner).



Assyro-Babylonian styles rather than toward the more current Court Style. Perhaps the best example of this phenomenon is provided by the most important functionary in the Fortification archive, Parnaka, the son of Arsam.<sup>58</sup> His first seal, PFS 9\* (figs. 9–10), a heroic encounter with Assyrianizing iconography rendered in the local Fortification Style, Parnaka replaced on the sixteenth day of the third month of the twenty-second year in the reign of Darius the Great (6 June 500 B.C.).<sup>59</sup> His new seal, PFS 16\* (figs. 11–12), another heroic encounter, was a dramatic and spectacular work of art, probably a commissioned piece cut just before June 500 B.C.<sup>60</sup> Clearly the product of an artist of exceptional talent, PFS 16\* bespeaks the vitality of the Assyrianizing seal-carving tradition down into the early part of the fifth century B.C. The artist shows a complete control of line and detail, every contour finished in an almost calligraphic line. The carving achieves a wonderfully expressive effect through dramatic modeling and emphatic pose and gesture. The treatment of the quivering muscles in the backs and lower bodies of the lions in small, compacted oval volumes, and the pose of the lions with one paw upraised and back to the viewer, find striking parallels in the Assyrian royal seal type (fig. 13) and monumental wall reliefs (fig. 14), to mention only two examples.

Parnaka, Irtašduna, and others like them whose seals are preserved on the Fortification Tablets show that many of the elite at court had varied artistic tastes and actively pursued artists who could accommodate those tastes. A study of the Fortification Tablet texts and seal impressions creates a very different picture of the royal family, advisors, and administrators

surrounding the great king than that painted in the Greek sources. Rather than shameless sycophants, we see individuals (both men and women) who wield power, travel widely, give orders, and patronize artistic styles suited to their own taste, even when those tastes differ radically from that emanating from the official center most closely associated with the king. This has far-reaching implications for our



FIG. 13. Assyrian royal seal type found impressed on a bulla (British Museum SM 2276).

The cuneiform text reads: "the *ilku* which Sargon took from the *bêl pihâti*." Dated to 715 B.C. Courtesy Trustees of the British Museum.



FIG. 11. PFS 16\* on PF 665.

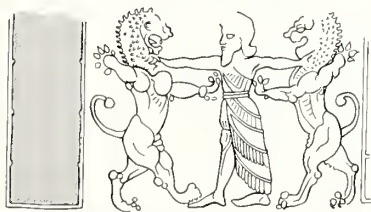


FIG. 12. Line drawing of collated image of 16\* (L. Sterner).



FIG. 14. Relief panel (British Museum 124886-7) from Room S(1), North Palace of King Assurbanipal at Nineveh, showing king and lion. Courtesy Trustees of the British Museum.



understanding of Achaemenid culture and should force us to rethink the traditional (hostile) Hellenocentric view of life under the Achaemenid Persian kings.<sup>61</sup>

Seals such as PFS 38 and PFS 16\* also raise interesting questions about the transmission of older seal-carving traditions. Unlike PFS 93\* and PFS 51, both clearly heirlooms from the pre-empire period, the seals of Irtašduna and Parnaka were probably cut sometime in the late sixth century B.C. Older seals may have served as inspiration, and indeed the Fortification Tablets are ratified by a few examples of what may be Modeled Style seals dating to the earlier period. These seal-carving traditions must also, however, have been perpetuated in the glyptic workshops. Despite the upheavals associated with the disintegration of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires, seal artists continued to provide products for the administrators and bureaucrats in cities such as Babylon. It should be remembered that Cyrus' entry into Babylon in 539 B.C. seems to have been a peaceful one. The day-to-day legal and economic transactions, as well as those associated with court bureaucrats, probably continued without interruption.<sup>62</sup> Under these circumstances, craft methods could continue to be handed down, masters to apprentices, across generations. Because seal artists were relatively mobile, owing to the few tools and materials needed to practice their craft, they would have been sheltered from the rise and fall of the political fortunes of large states. These artists most likely traveled to those places where commissions existed, be it Nimrud, Nineveh, Susa, Babylon, Pasargadae, or any imperial or provincial center. In this way seal-carving traditions moved from one place to another and survived into the late sixth century B.C. The building program at Persepolis and the large number of people in the bureaucracy needing seals must have drawn artists from throughout Mesopotamia and Elam. These artists brought with them, and perpetuated, carving styles inherited and learned in the seal workshops of these areas. PFS 93\* and PFS 51 remind us that a tradition of seal usage and artistic patronage existed among the Achaemenid elite. So far we have only a glimpse of this patronage, but there is every reason to believe that rulers after the time of Cyrus son of Teispes would have continued similar practices with artists trained in the workshops in Elam, Persia, Assyria, or Babylonia.

### *The Local Fortification Style: PFS 66\**

PFS 66\* occurs only in the J Texts, and it is limited to transactions concerning the delivery of flour. The



FIG. 15. PFS 66a\* on PF 702.

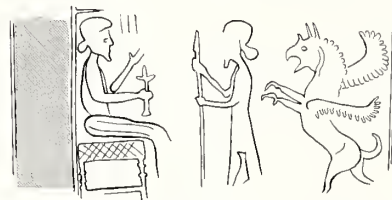


FIG. 16. Line drawing of collated image of PFS 66a\* (L. Sterner).

seal is applied on the left, right, or upper edges of the tablet and is always accompanied by PFS 7\*, applied on the reverse of the tablet. It thus seems that the office represented by PFS 66\* could not authorize transactions of its own accord but needed the counterseal of PFS 7\*.<sup>63</sup> Hallock suggests that the office be identified as the royal miller.<sup>64</sup>

Research subsequent to Hallock's has shown that there are two different versions of PFS 66\*: PFS 66a\* (figs. 15–16) and PFS 66b\* (figs. 17–18). PFS 66a\* can definitely be identified on PF 701 and 702; PFS 66b\* on PF 699 and 700 and perhaps also on PF 704.<sup>65</sup> On PF 703 and PF 704 the impressions are too fragmentary to reveal which version of the seal they carry. The compositions of the two versions are identical, as are their inscriptions; they differ in the spacing of figures and the rendering of certain details of human and animal anatomy, although stylistically they are very similar. On PFS 66b\* the torso of the human figure is wider and more flatly engraved; the winged creature at far right has a longer beak, which is rendered differently, and the upper wing emerges directly out of the lower wing (cf. PFS 66a\*, where the upper wing emerges out of the neck of the creature). Impressions of PFS 66b\* are sharp and clear, those of PFS 66a\* rather blurred. PFS 66a\* seems to have been a heavily worn seal.

Presently, the two tablets upon which PFS 66a\* can be identified positively, PF 701 and 702, both date to 502–501 B.C. The two tablets on which PFS 66b\* can be identified positively, PF 699 and 700, date to 498–497 B.C. and 499–498 B.C., respectively. Since PFS 66a\* seems to be a very worn seal, which cannot be



FIG. 17. PFS 66b\* on PF 700.



FIG. 18. Line drawing of collated image of PFS 66b\* (L. Sterner).

documented after the use of PFS 66b\*, and since the seals occur on a very restricted type of transaction and show the exact same composition, we may infer that PFS 66a\* was replaced by PFS 66b\* sometime after 502 B.C. and before 498 B.C.<sup>66</sup> Perhaps the worn quality of PFS 66a\* became a source of concern, given the importance of the transactions, so a new seal was commissioned. Such duplication of important seals is documented in other archival contexts in the Near East.<sup>67</sup>

At the far left of PFS 66a\* and PFS 66b\* a seated figure looks out to proper left. The right forearm extends out horizontally just above the lap, the hand holding a flower blossom. The left arm is bent and held above the right arm, the hand open to expose the palm. The figure appears to wear a long robe. The hair is worn in a small chignon at the back of the head; a pointed chin may indicate a short beard. The figure sits upon a backless stool. The stool in PFS 66a\* carries a pattern of cross-hatching, possibly to indicate webbing, and each leg has two rounded moldings. A bearded figure holding a staff before his body approaches the seated figure from the right. He wears a tunic and trousers. Behind this figure, also moving towards the seated figure, is a rampant winged, bird-headed lion. The paneled Aramaic inscription, which acts as a terminal, reads:

[m]n vtipt<sup>68</sup>

On PFS 66a\* there are faint traces of a horizontal line above the head of the seated figure, several vertical lines just before the face, as well as a horizontal line in the field between the seated figure and the staff-bearer. These traces could be the remnants of an

inscription, in which case the seal would have been recut to produce the present design, but this cannot be determined with any certainty.

A strict sense of hierarchical scale is observed in the design; the seated figure is larger than both the standing figure and the rampant creature. Stylistically, PFS 66a\* (figs. 15–16) shows a very plain engraving of shallow depth, but this may be the result of heavy wear or recutting of the seal.<sup>69</sup> The outline is at times irregular and blurred. The human figures are small and thin, with no interior differentiation of musculature or drapery. The large, round head sits on a long, thin neck. The upper torsos of both human figures are rendered in profile, with the forward shoulder and upper arm separated slightly from the torso by deeper engraving. The torso of the seated figure has a hiatus at the waist, giving the appearance of two completely separate forms. The winged creature exhibits the same simple engraving as seen on the human figures. The lion body has a sharply arched back, low, heavy hindquarters, and short legs. Wings carry one row of feathers and curl upward at the tips. The hindquarters swell slightly in a single mass. Transitions are sharply delineated at the lower belly and between the lion neck and bird head. The composition is carefully arranged so that figures do not overlap; each exists in an isolated space.

PFS 66b\* (figs. 17–18) exhibits much the same style.<sup>70</sup> The engraving of the seal is sharper, so that each figure stands out more clearly, but flatter than that on PFS 66a\*. The seated figure has a continuous torso with no hiatus at the waist. Overall, the outline of the human figures on PFS 66b\* seems less fluid, more stiff and angular. The bird head on the creature is longer and thinner than that on PFS 66a\* and held at a higher angle.

Both versions of PFS 66\* belong to a style of seal carving I have termed the “Fortification Style,”<sup>71</sup> since the Fortification Tablets include the impressions of many seals executed in this style.<sup>72</sup> Although showing a good deal of variation, the style is distinguished by engraving of shallow to medium depth, with very simple figures and starkly plain surface treatment. Animal forms tend to be more plastic than human. As mentioned previously, a few elements of style and imagery on select seals in the Fortification Style show connections to “Early Persian” seal-carving traditions. Overall, however, the Fortification Style represents something new and unknown outside of the Persepolis impressions. Since the style is so prevalent in the Fortification archive and is almost nonexistent in museum collections, we may conclude that it represents a local seal-carving tradition native to the area of Persepolis or southwestern Iran in general.<sup>73</sup> This



style evidently flourished under the reign of Darius, when the area of Fars became an important administrative center of the empire and drew large numbers of administrators needing seals.

### *Oddities: PFS 2*

In PF 710 from the J Texts Irtuppiya uses his personal seal, PFS 2 (figs. 19–20), which he also uses quite often in transactions outside of the J Texts.<sup>74</sup> In other J Texts, Irtuppiya is a frequent supplier of grain, barley loaves, *ra-zi*, *tarmu* grain, and *ba-nu-ra*.<sup>75</sup> All these transactions are secured by PFS 7\*. Outside of the J Texts, Irtuppiya is an official of high rank: his seal PFS 2 is the second most commonly occurring seal in the archive and one of the few needing no counterseal to ratify transactions.

In light of his importance within the administrative system, it is not surprising to find Irtuppiya playing such a prominent role in the J Texts. Nevertheless, the single occurrence of his seal PFS 2 in the J Texts is striking. The transaction is, however, unusual and somewhat vague.<sup>76</sup> It seems to involve the provisioning of cattle that had already been “dispensed in behalf of the king.” In other words, the cattle had already been received (the transaction not preserved in the Fortification archive but sealed, as normal, with PFS 93\*), and this shipment constitutes a later transaction in which grain is brought in to feed the cattle. The fact that Irtuppiya uses his own seal PFS 2 indicates that the normal channels are not followed in this transaction; perhaps Irtuppiya, who had wide connections within the system, was called upon for the emergency provisioning of these cattle.<sup>77</sup>



FIG. 19. PFS 2 on PF 710.

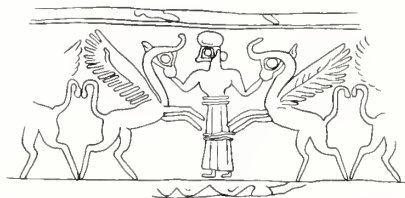


FIG. 20. Line drawing of collated image of PFS 2 (L. Sterner).

PFS 2 (figs. 19–20) preserves a traditional version of the heroic encounter theme (hero controlling two rampant winged creatures); however, certain features of iconography and style are unusual, and as a whole the seal finds few stylistic parallels in or outside of the corpus of seal impressions found on the Fortification Tablets.<sup>78</sup> It has an elegant, refined quality coupled with a severely abstracted geometric approach to select passages. The human head is a square outline within which a huge round eye dominates the entire field. Animal heads exhibit the same geometric approach, but they are triangular in outline. The straight lines of the square human head and triangular animal heads are dramatically highlighted by the heavy drill work in the eyes and noses, as well as in the cap of hair and chignon at the back of the human head. The rendering of the hero's skirt, which shows a rigid geometric precision in its horizontal and vertical striations, finds no exact parallel among the seal impressions on the Fortification Tablets. The abstract geometry of the faces yields, however, to an elegant, elongated line in human and animal bodies. A smooth, undulating rhythm runs the entire length of the animal bodies, carried through even into the horns of the composite creatures. The long delicate forelegs, slightly bent, seem almost brittle. Volumes swell in small masses of animal flesh, contained within a tight, expressive outline. Horizontal borders occur at the top and bottom of the design. Triangular markings, perhaps traces of seal caps, run along part of the outside edges of these borders. Overall, the seal seems stylistically out of place in our archive, but the careful and accomplished engraving suggests a master artist.<sup>79</sup>

The seal of Irtuppiya, PFS 2, represents a considerable number of seals in a wide range of styles with no immediately recognizable link to known glyptic traditions, either Achaemenid or earlier. These seals suggest that some patrons may have acquired their seals in areas far removed from Fars and Elam and that those seals have yet to appear in museum collections or in the archaeological record. As recorded in the Fortification travel texts (Q Texts), some officials journeyed from as far afield as Sardis (PF 1321), Bactria (PF 1287), and India (PF 1318). There was thus probably ample opportunity for a high-ranking official to travel and to purchase a seal outside of Fars. Conversely, since the style of PFS 2 has affinities with a few seals from the Fortification archive, it may come from a local workshop or artist who specialized in a particular style that appears only rarely in the archive. Future research into the many unstudied impressions may yield more evidence of this hand. The seal shows how an important official in the system can reach

outside the normal network of seal engravers (whether the seal is an unusual local product or a provincial one) to acquire a distinctive seal style unrelated to current trends. Perhaps he was mindful of his status and the importance of his sealed transactions and took care to select a highly distinctive style.

### *The Court Style: PFS 7\* and PFS 859\**

The term "Court Style" was first used by John Boardman to describe a special class of Achaemenid Persian glyptic, which he said was cut "broadly" in "the style of the earlier Achaemenid sculpture in Persia," with some "influence of immigrant Greek artists."<sup>80</sup> Working exclusively with the relatively small number of seal impressions from the Treasury Tablets and unprovenanced seals in museum collections, Boardman was forced, I think, to invoke the architectural reliefs from Persepolis and Greek art—the only

known stylistic parallels that could anchor his analysis. The Fortification archive contains many important examples of the Court Style, and from close study of these seals we may now articulate more precisely the exact nature of the style, its origins and evolution, and its meaning within the greater context of Achaemenid imperial art. The Court Style seals from Persepolis also raise important issues pertaining to early Achaemenid monumental relief.<sup>81</sup> PFS 7\* (figs. 21–22) and to a lesser extent PFS 859\* (figs. 23–24) are critical to the discussion.

As Hallock points out, PFS 7\* is an office seal used by unnamed subordinates acting on behalf of the king in acquiring foodstuffs. This office ratifies transactions involving all types of commodities except cattle, which fell to the office represented by PFS 93\*.<sup>82</sup> Of the office seals on the J Texts, PFS 7\* occurs most frequently, and one suspects that this office held the most authority of the three.<sup>83</sup>

PFS 7\* (figs. 21–22) is a very important seal for our understanding of the Court Style.<sup>84</sup> The scene shows a crowned figure engaged in a heroic encounter. He stands upright, facing proper left, arms stretched out straight above shoulder level to grasp two rampant, winged bulls by the horn. A figure in a winged disk who hovers directly over the head of the hero faces proper left and raises both arms before his chest. No impression currently known preserves the upper part of the head of this figure, but one would expect him to be crowned. The tail and two wings of the winged disk have the broad, rectilinear forms that also occur on the winged disk at Behistun, tomb facades at Persepolis, and PTS 2\*, PTS 15, and PTS 26.<sup>85</sup> A tendril depends from either side of the tail, terminating in a hook. Date palms frame the scene. Imbricate hatching denotes the bark on each tree, which has a bulbous cluster of fruit depending to each side. The paneled inscription, in Old Persian, Elamite, and Akkadian, acts as a terminal.<sup>86</sup>

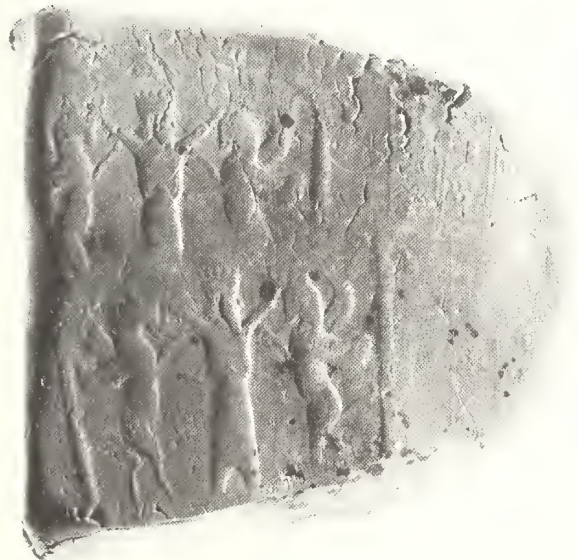


FIG. 21. PFS 7\* on PF 702.

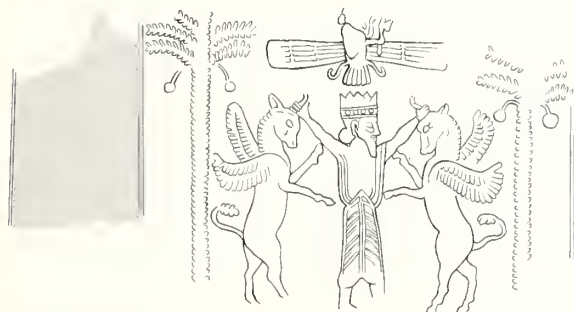


FIG. 22. Line drawing of collated image of PFS 7\* (L. Sterner).

a-d-m : d-a-r-y-v-u-š : XŠ  
v.u v.da-ri-ia-na-u-iš EŠŠANA  
ana-ku m.da-ri-ia-muš LUGAL. GAL  
"I (am) Darius, Great King"

Relatively few seals used on the Fortification Tablets carry inscriptions, and PFS 7\* is one of only four seals from the archive that bear the name of the Great King.<sup>87</sup> I know of only four other seals inscribed with the name of Darius that can be attributed to Darius I.<sup>88</sup>

The hero wears the Persian court robe and dentate crown with studded band. The garment shows detailing around the outer edges on the torso. Double





FIG. 23. PFS 859\* on PF 691.



FIG. 24. Line drawing of collated image of PFS 859\* (L. Sterner).

vertical folds run down the center of the lower garment, with pendant catenaries indicated. The hero's beard terminates in a blunt point over the left shoulder. His hair bunches up at the end with a slight curl, almost in the form of a chignon. A strong jaw line starts directly under the base of the crown, runs down vertically to the jaw, then continues diagonally to the beard. A slight curl next to the jaw line just below the crown indicates the ear. The mouth is straight, the large eye oval and set at a diagonal, the nose straight and prominent. The dentate crown has five points.<sup>89</sup> Four bosses enclosed in horizontal bands decorate the lower part of the crown.

Each bull has two slender, curved wings: one placed horizontally from the back, the other diagonally. The wings consist of two rows of feathers. The lower wing comes across the shoulder of the creatures, the top line of the wing rib arching down toward the lower foreleg.

Stylistically, PFS 7\* is an early example of the fully developed Court Style as found in the seal impressions from Persepolis. The seal belongs to the work of an accomplished artist, whose production I have recently isolated in the seal impressions from the Fortification and Treasury Tablets. He seems to have been a leading figure in the development of the Court Style at Persepolis.<sup>90</sup> Attention to detail is the hallmark of all the early Persepolitan artists working in the Court Style. Here we note especially the details on the Persian court robe and the crown of the hero, the wings and forelegs of the bull creatures, the feathers and tendrils of the winged disk, and the imbricate markings on the trunks of the date palms. Engraving is of medium depth. The Persian court



FIG. 25. Door jamb relief from the Palace of Darius at Persepolis, showing heroic encounter. Courtesy Margaret Cool Root.

robe tends to swallow and hide the body, although the artist shows some interest in musculature in the upper body, where we see the slightly bulging outline of the hero's thick arms and the triangular mass of swelling flesh at the neck. Drapery has a doughy texture. The upper part of the garment has a heavy outline, which flairs outwards at the lower hem, running to rounded ends and clinging to the body.

The winged bulls are magnificent creatures. The large, barrel-chested bodies are broad and flatly engraved, with a sharp, sinuous outline. The artist has given a more plastic treatment to the hindquarters of the creature to proper left, the forward hind leg swelling slightly in a single, simple mass. A calligraphic "S" line marks the front of the chest. The forelegs of the creatures display exceptionally careful execution. Hoofs, knee joints, and bags of flesh just above the hoofs add wonderful touches of realism, as do the delicate snouts. As in all Persepolitan Court Style seals, the composition is dominated by a strict sense of verticality and symmetry.

PFS 859\* occurs on only one text, PF 691, where cattle are dispersed in behalf of the king. Why PFS 859\* is used here rather than PFS 93\*, the seal used for all other cattle transactions in the J Texts,

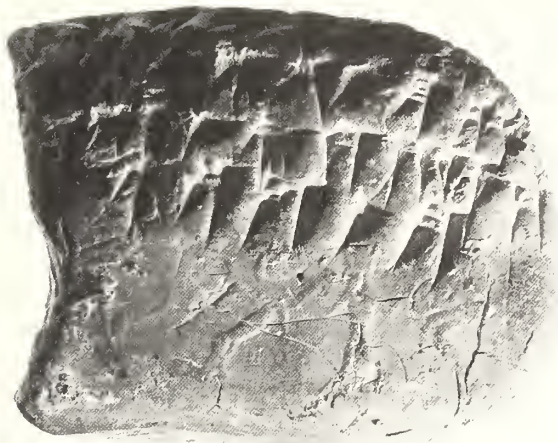


FIG. 26. PFS 34 on PF 151.

cannot readily be explained.<sup>91</sup> Perhaps the person controlling the office represented by PFS 93\* did not have access to his office seal at the time that the transaction recorded on PF 691 needed to be sealed and so used his personal seal PFS 859\* to secure it. The tablet is indeed sealed on both the left edge and the reverse by PFS 859\* and thus required no counterseal (transactions secured by PFS 93\* also never require a counterseal). The style and imagery of PFS 859\* suggest a highly placed individual, and, as I have argued above (pp. 6–7), the individual staffing the office of PFS 93\* clearly must have been of very high social status, probably even a member of the Achaemenid family. The exceptionally fine execution of the seal and its style suggest an owner of elite social status.

Although only partially preserved, PFS 859\* (figs. 23–24) was clearly a very large and magnificent seal; unfortunately, only part of the upper segment of the design is preserved on the tablet PF 691.<sup>92</sup> A heroic figure dressed in the Persian court robe, bow and tasseled quiver on his back, facing proper left, extends his left hand to grasp a rampant horned lion by the horn. In his right hand he holds a large dagger, which he plunges into the chest of the lion creature. The creature pushes its right paw against the hero's left biceps. The quiver is attached to the hero's back with several straps and carries at least three arrows. A beautifully engraved inscription, acting as a terminal, is only partially preserved and, unfortunately, cannot be read.

The seal is cut in a broad version of the Court Style, but I have not yet been able to isolate the individual hand in other seal impressions from the Fortification archive.<sup>93</sup> The rendering of the human anatomy follows normal conventions for the Court Style, with the exception of the round head, which sits upon a thick



FIG. 27. PFS 168 on PF 1667.

cylindrical neck. Although it is difficult to discern, the hero seems beardless. A thick mass of hair bunches high at the back of the neck. The profile of the animal creature's face cannot be paralleled, although the spiked mane appears in other seals of the Court Style and the Modeled Style. The composition is quite striking, as is the profile view of the upper torso of the hero. Such views are not unknown in the seal impressions preserved on the Fortification archive, but the one on PFS 859\* is handled with a good deal of flair. We see not only the profile shoulder but also what seems to be the billowing pocket of the arm hole of the garment. The carefully rendered garment and weapons, as well as the distinctive treatment of the profile torso and head of the hero, give the design an air of sophistication not normally seen in the seal impressions from this archive. This scene bears a striking resemblance to the door jamb reliefs in the Palace of Darius on the Persepolis terrace (fig. 25).<sup>94</sup> The similarity of composition, the unusual profile view of the hero, and the extreme care in the execution of the overall design suggest that the wall reliefs and this seal have similar sources of inspiration.<sup>95</sup> The tablet on which PFS 859\* occurs is dated to the nineteenth year of Darius, 503–502 B.C.

PFS 7\* and PFS 859\* attest to the strength and maturity of the Court Style within the glyptic medium and reflect a fully conceived notion of stylistic and iconographic attributes; this already by 503–502 B.C., the earliest usage dates we have for both seals. Other seals from the Fortification archive show features related to both the style and iconography of the Court Style and thus provide important documentation on this style's early experimental stages. As examples I offer the work of two distinctive hands, artists who seem to follow a general set of iconographic and stylistic mandates but whose work does not quite have the same impact as PFS 7\* and PFS 859\*.

The first hand, whom I have called the Artist of the Crowned Heroes, survives in numerous seals from the Fortification archive, of which I include here PFS 34 (fig. 26) and PFS 168 (fig. 27).<sup>96</sup> Stylistically, he is working within the local Fortification Style tradition, but certain aspects of iconography and composition suggest linkages to the Court Style. He prefers



small, thin figures for both human and animals. The rectangular body of the human figure is typical of the Fortification Style, as are the long, attenuated animal forms. Yet there also seems to be a strong connection, seen especially in PFS 34, to PFS 93\* and PFS 51 of the "Early Persian" style. Note the manner in which the hind legs of the animals are held together and the sharp articulation between the hindquarters and the bodies. These conventions find close parallels in the "Early Persian" heirloom PFS 51 (figs. 3–4). The animal forms in PFS 34 are, however, more attenuated than normally seen in the "Early Persian" style, reflecting the tendency in the local Fortification Style toward thinner form. The artist treats in a very distinctive manner the union of the forelegs, chest, and wings of the animal creatures. The upper rib of the wing comes down across the shoulder, linking into the lower foreleg. A separate passage sits above this, representing the chest; it in turn joins with the upper foreleg. This rendering of the wing, chest, and foreleg is often found in a relatively large group of seals from Persepolis that show connections to earlier Assyro-Babylonian Modeled Style seal-carving traditions. The almost universal occurrence of the dentate crown and the sharply articulated jaw lines on human heads place the artist within the same milieu as the Court Style. His compositions are very formal (Court Style again) but often spacious (cf. PFS 51 and PFS 93\*). For garments he uses both the Persian court robe and the old-fashioned Assyrian-type garment. In sum, this artist's main training seems to lie in the local Fortification Style, but he perpetuates select stylistic features of Assyro-Babylonian and "Early Persian" styles. Certain details of iconography betray his exposure to Court Style influences.

An artist who works even closer to the Court Style is the Artist of the Pendant Robe.<sup>97</sup> As with the Artist of the Crowned Heroes, his work appears frequently, and he has a very distinctive hand. I illustrate four of his works here, PFS 52, PFS 95, PFS 102, and PFS 301. All seals preserve his trademark treatment of the

upper part of the Persian court robe as a large swag of drapery depending from either side of a long, thin human torso. He seems to be working very close to the traditions of the Artist of the Crowned Heroes but struggling to come to grips with a more formal, and more monumental, expression. On PFS 52 (fig. 28) the creature to the hero's proper right is almost an exact replica of that seen on PFS 34 (fig. 26).<sup>98</sup> Note, however, that the animal forms seem thicker, a tendency even more pronounced in the lion to the hero's proper left. Although rather awkwardly rendered, the more modeled technique used in the heavy massive neck and chest and thick forelegs with medial striations and spiky claws reveals a desire to aggrandize. The composition is beginning to follow a pattern of verticals (note the lion) and horizontals. On PFS 95 (fig. 29) we see the same treatment of the lions.<sup>99</sup> This seal preserves especially well his rendering of the Persian court robe; while the idiosyncratic treatment of the upper part of the garment is a trait limited to this artist, the depiction of the lower garment with two parallel central vertical folds and pendant catenaries appears often in the Court Style (e.g., PFS 7\* [figs. 21–22]). PFS 102 (fig. 30) may be his most accomplished piece.<sup>100</sup> The human form and garment are unchanged, but his animal form is strong and assured in this design. These bulls are magnificent creatures; the outline is controlled, suggesting power in the gracefully arched backs of the bulls and delicacy in the sensitive detailing in the heads. These bulls are every bit the equal of those seen on PFS 7\*. The composition is a little loose (note the excessive length of the hero's arms—necessary to bridge the space that the more massive animal forms require), but it has the same staccato arrangement of verticals and horizontals and strong sense of symmetry seen in PFS 7\* and most Court Style designs from Persepolis. Lastly, the fragmentary PFS 301 (fig. 31),<sup>101</sup> whose design is very difficult to reconstruct because it has been over-rolled by another seal. Nevertheless, we clearly see the distinctive rendering of the Persian court robe as well as new iconographic features: the dentate crown and the bow and quiver. The animal forms are only partially preserved, but we notice the same schematic treatment of the lion's snout in PFS 52 (fig. 28) and PFS 95 (fig. 29); the animal form may



FIG. 28. PFS 52 on PF 1767.

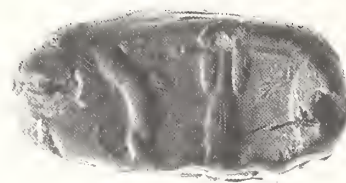


FIG. 29. PFS 95 on PF 1139.

be the heaviest this artist ever attempts. The thick wings with three to four rows of soft feathers are mainstream Court Style.

These two artists represent the early, experimental stages of the formation of the Court Style. These hands, along with other artists and individual seal designs preserved among the seal impressions in the Fortification archive, suggest that the complex development of the Achaemenid Court Style in seals involved a series of innovations and experiments by a few glyptic specialists within the context of several existing seal-carving traditions, especially the Assyro-Babylonian Modeled Style, the local Fortification Style, and the "Early Persian" style.<sup>102</sup> Some seals from the Fortification Tablets seem to reflect early experimental designs mixing features of what becomes the Court Style with features from these earlier glyptic traditions.<sup>103</sup> The stylistic origin and evolution of the Court Style in seals, then, was an almost purely glyptic phenomenon. Its formal similarity to the architectural wall reliefs at Persepolis does not indicate that the seal artists copied the wall reliefs. Rather, it shows that both phenomena had the same ultimate source of formal inspiration: the imperial program carefully planned under the direction of the Great King and his closest advisors.<sup>104</sup> The reign of Darius has long been recognized as the critical period in the canonization of official Achaemenid art; the thrust of this effort included not only architectural relief at Persepolis (and presumably other imperial capitals) but also seals and coinage.<sup>105</sup>

This particular reading of the Court Style is, I think, very different from what Boardman had in mind. Freed from the wall reliefs and placed within the larger contexts of seal impressions preserved on the Fortification Tablets and of an imperial program of artistic expression, the Court Style seals become an important set of documents for understanding the

manipulation of art for propagandistic purposes and can supplement the information gleaned about such questions from the architectural reliefs and coinage. Obviously, all the phenomena are related, since they are responding to the same stimulus: demands by the royal patron for a visual language of control and empire. The Court Style in seals, however, owes its particular *stylistic* qualities to experimentations within the seal workshops.<sup>106</sup>

Interestingly, only a few scenes (primarily heroic encounter, archer, presentation scenes, and scenes of worship with an altar) are documented in the Court Style seals provenanced at Persepolis. This would suggest that the official glyptic imagery was tightly controlled. It is also interesting to compare the imagery of the Court Style with the imagery of the "Early Persian" heirlooms PFS 93\* and PFS 51. Those seals represent the conscious selection of a particular style and imagery by earlier Achaemenid royalty. The horseman (both hunter and warrior) dominates this imagery. The theme of the horseman is perpetuated down into the time of Darius in literary tradition through Herodotus' account (III.88) of Darius winning the empire by virtue of his horse and his groom Oebares; Herodotus (I.136) also records that every young Persian was taught three main things: to ride, to draw the bow, and to speak the truth. Darius I preserves much the same tradition in his tomb inscription (DNb):

Trained I am both with hands and feet. As a horseman I am a good horseman. As a bowman I am a good bowman both afoot and on horseback. As a spearman I am a good spearman both afoot and on horseback.

Darius' appeal to this particular Achaemenid tradition of great horsemanship in his tomb inscription (the same tradition that was circulating among Herodotus' sources) does not find overt expression in official architectural wall relief, coinage, or



FIG. 30. PFS 102 on PF 154.



FIG. 31. PFS 301 on PF 1230.



glyptic.<sup>107</sup> Rather, the new imperial vision involves a static balance of cosmic forces (control and order) centering on the figure of the Great King.<sup>108</sup> Viewed in this context, the visual imagery of PFS 7\* seems even more striking and evocative of Achaemenid concepts of world order. Darius and his planners consciously abandoned the free-flowing, active, in some respects suspenseful scenes of the horseman, placing in their stead a more formal imagery; in the case of the heroic encounter, this imagery was drawn from an age-old Mesopotamian theme, resonating with royal overtones from Assyria. Seen thus as an expression of patron mandate rather than simply the imitation in small-scale art of monumental reliefs, the Court Style in seals may in addition contribute substantially to several aspects of the discussion of the architectural reliefs.

PFS 7\* and PFS 859\* hold a key place in the evolution of the Court Style in glyptic art since they are two of the earliest dated examples (503–502 B.C.) of the style in its fully developed form. This is critical, for it means that already by 503–502 B.C. official Achaemenid seal art had been canonized. We may take this date as a terminus before which the early experimental stages of the Court Style will have occurred since the presence of a seal on the Persepolis tablets represents only the usage dates of the seal, not its dates of manufacture. Unfortunately, we are not in a position at the moment to know how much earlier, since the Fortification Tablets begin only in 509 B.C. and before that date we have no securely dated examples of the Court Style in glyptic.

One important aspect of the Court Style in glyptic is the consistent pattern of its iconographic details—the crowned hero in the Persian court robe, date palms, the figure in a winged disk, paneled inscriptions—many shared with monumental relief. Thus, if we find these iconographic elements in monumental reliefs of an earlier date, we might postulate that the Court Style in glyptic also existed then. It is very possible that some or many of the Court Style seals and experimental pieces found on the Fortification Tablets may predate 509 B.C. Only a few surviving examples of large-scale relief predate the Fortification Tablets, the most important being the architectural reliefs at Pasargadae, the rock-cut relief at Behistun, and the tomb facade relief of Darius at Naqsh-e Rostam.<sup>109</sup> The archaizing style of the Behistun monument removes it from this particular discussion.<sup>110</sup> Iconographically, the tomb relief of Darius at Naqsh-e Rostam, dated by Root to early in the reign of Darius (after 518 B.C.), shows many of the features that also appear in the Court Style: the Persian court robe, dentate crown, and the figure in a winged disk.<sup>111</sup> The

similarity of these iconographic details on the tomb relief of Darius at Naqsh-e Rostam to those on Court Style seals preserved in the Fortification Tablets may suggest that the early formative phases of the Achaemenid Court Style in seals date back to the years 520–510 B.C.

Because of the debate over the date of the reliefs from Palace P at Pasargadae,<sup>112</sup> the Court Style can be less securely tied to those reliefs, which clearly show the distinctive rendering of the Persian court robe. In fact, the seals from the Fortification Tablets may yield some new insight into the dating of the Palace P reliefs. One objection to the dating of these reliefs in the reign of Cyrus has been their distinctive rendering of the Persian Court robe in a style that seems better dated to the time of Darius. The seal impressions from the Fortification Tablets prove without a doubt that, at least at the end of the sixth century B.C., several stylistic idioms were current, some echoing older seal-carving traditions from Assyria, Babylonia, and Elam (see above, pp. 3–10), others reflecting more recent developments (e.g., the Court Style and the Fortification Style). This multiplicity of styles shows that a patron, especially a royal one, had choices. Parnaka's selection of a strongly Assyrianizing seal design for his second seal PFS 16\* in 500 B.C. exemplifies a highly placed patron exercising just such an option. Thus, Root's contention that the canonical depiction of the Persian court robe need not *a priori* postdate Behistun receives support from the fact that different styles appear side by side in the seal impressions from Persepolis.<sup>113</sup> Indeed, the linear evolution of style and of the rendering of drapery patterns that occurs in Greek art is really quite foreign in the Mesopotamian/Iranian context.

Surprisingly, the Court Style is relatively rare among the seal impressions preserved on the Fortification Tablets. Of the 328 seals included in fascicle I of the catalogue raisonné, only 15 (4.57 percent) are cut in the fully developed Court Style. Many of these seals belong to high-ranking individuals or offices. Preliminary research on the rest of the seal impressions in the archive shows a similar percentage of Court Style seals. This may suggest either 1) that by the last decade of the sixth century B.C., the Court Style in seals was still a rather new phenomenon and that relatively few such seals had come into general circulation; or 2) that in the last decade of the sixth century B.C. distribution of seals cut in the Court Style was restricted to only a few of the highest-ranking individuals and offices associated with the Persian court. In the latter scenario, these seals would have acted as markers of status and position, much in the way that Irene Winter has argued for those seals in the



Fig. 32. London Darius Cylinder (British Museum 89132). Courtesy Trustees of the British Museum.

Ur III period showing the presentation scene with a seated king and a royal name inscription.<sup>114</sup> To decide between these two options, we would need to have a large sealed archive predating the Fortification Tablets and preserving seals belonging to offices and individuals of varying rank. More work also must be done on the complete corpus of Court Style seals from Persepolis, especially in reference to patterns of seal ownership and usage. The exact dates of the formation of the Court Style must, then, await further discoveries. At the moment, however, we cannot rule out the possibility that the Court Style may date back even into the reign of Cyrus.

The securely dated occurrence of PFS 7\* and PFS 859\* in 503–502 B.C. also bears on the execution of the architectural reliefs on the Persepolis terrace.<sup>115</sup> The earliest sculptural activity on the Persepolis terrace has tended to be dated to late in the reign of Darius.<sup>116</sup> The Palace of Darius is generally agreed to be the earliest building completed on the terrace, since the doorways carry inscriptions of Darius: DPa carved on the door jambs, DPb carved on the fold of the king's robe, and DPc carved on the window frames. The sculptures from the Palace of Darius show every indication of being the final, canonized form of a sophisticated sculptural statement on the place and power of the Great King in the Persian cosmos. The early, experimental stages, when both style and iconography were in the process of creation and elaboration, have not survived.

As suggested above, the Court Style in seals represents the glyptic counterpart to the architectural reliefs; both are the formal sculptural expression of the power of the Great King, and in both the king and his closest advisors seem to have been directly involved in creating the official canon. The architectural reliefs and seals employ similar iconography, and

one imagines that the formulation of the sculptural and glyptic programs probably occurred at approximately the same time. As we have seen, the fully developed version of the Court Style in seal art already existed by at least 503–502 B.C. Official Achaemenid coinage appears at approximately the same time.<sup>117</sup>

Clearly, then, by the last decade of the sixth century B.C. at the very latest a unified program of visual imagery of empire was firmly in place in official Achaemenid glyptic and coinage.<sup>118</sup> It is thus possible, and indeed compelling, to place sculptural activity in the form of architectural relief on the Persepolis terrace in the last decade of the sixth century B.C. PF 1580, dated to the fifteenth year of Darius (507–506 B.C.), records the first payment of grain rations to artisans at Persepolis.<sup>119</sup> Most likely, official Achaemenid seal art, coin dies, and architectural relief developed concurrently; the formative and experimental phase of this movement may be placed somewhere between the years 540 and 510 B.C.

Finally, since PFS 7\*, PFS 859\*, and the other examples of the Court Style preserved in the Fortification and the Treasury Tablets occur at an imperial capital in the heartland of the empire, they should now establish the standard for discussions of the nature of the Achaemenid Court Style in glyptic art throughout the empire. This material will help in categorizing the many unprovenanced and undated examples of the Court Style now stored in museum collections, which in turn may lead to the identification, and so better understanding, of regional styles existing at this period. The famous London Darius cylinder (fig. 32), traditionally illustrated as the definitional standard for the style, in fact seems far removed from the Court Style found at Persepolis, as represented by PFS 7\*.<sup>120</sup> The composition is



somewhat rigid, owing to the large size of the chariot, the stiff poses of all figures (including the dead lion below the draft animals), and the lack of interaction among figures. Stylistically, the figures are oddly proportioned (note the small size of the draft animals, the large human heads), the execution dry and linear (note the severely angular edges of the king's upper garment and the rendering of musculature in the animal bodies). Most unusual in comparison with the Persepolitan Court Style is the elaborate use of the unmasked drill, seen especially in the draft animals. The four-pointed dentate crown on the London cylinder is also odd. Lastly, the composition is undocumented in the corpus of Court Style seals found at Persepolis.

A few specific stylistic details on the London cylinder—the imbricate bark markings on the date palms, the broad, rectangular wings of the winged disk, the studded band on the crown, the detailing line along the outer edges of the king's upper garment, and the general tendency to elaborate surface detail—do find parallels in the Persepolis material. The London cylinder (height: 3.70 cm.; diameter: 1.60 cm.) is a good deal taller than PFS 7\* but not much thicker (estimated height of PFS 7\*: 2.85 cm.; estimated diameter of original seal: 1.52 cm.).

The London Darius cylinder, then, gives every indication of being a regional variation on the Court Style. The seal apparently was found in Egypt and so may have been executed there. The stiff linearity of the engraving and schematic drill work in the bodies of the draft animals call to mind Graeco-Persian gems; thus the piece may have connections with seal workshops in western Asia Minor.<sup>121</sup> Much important work remains to be done on the many unprovenanced Achaemenid Court Style seals.

## Summary

The initial seven seals presented in this article are related through their appearance on the J Texts of the Persepolis Fortification archive. An examination of these seals has revealed a small circle of highly placed individuals from the elite at Persepolis. Their seal designs hint at a network of artists drawing inspiration from a wide variety of sources. The artists themselves, however, are all united by the high quality of their work.<sup>122</sup> In many ways these seals represent the past ("Early Persian" heirlooms PFS 93\* and PFS 51), present (Fortification Style PFS 66\*), and future (Court Style PFS 7\* and PFS 859\*) of Achaemenid seal art in the late sixth century B.C. in the heartland of the empire. The two heirlooms, PFS 93\* and PFS

51, attest to the strong tradition in glyptic art (and thus also administrative bureaucracy) dating back to the early pre-empire period of the Achaemenid family. Although well over one hundred years old when applied to the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, these seals must have been carefully preserved. They yielded beautiful crisp designs in their impressed state in the late sixth century B.C. Both must have been seals with strong personal attachments in the family; one is certainly used by a high-ranking woman in the Achaemenid family (PFS 51); the other (PFS 93\*), I would suggest, in an office staffed by a member(s) of the royal family. In a similar way PFS 38, the seal of Queen Irtašduna, reflects older glyptic traditions, this time Modeled Style from Assyria and Babylonia. It is an outstanding example of a substantial group of seals in the Fortification archive that perpetuate (through the seal workshops) these Modeled Style traditions but in a Persepolitan landscape.

PFS 66\*, the office seal associated with transactions involving flour, is best understood in the context of a large number of seal impressions from the Fortification archive representing a glyptic tradition as yet undocumented in museum collections or previous excavations. The Fortification Style has yet fully to be studied in the impressions preserved on the Fortification Tablets; perhaps with the publication of this archive more seals cut in this style will be recognized in museum and private collections. At present, however, this style seems limited to the Persepolis region and may have been relatively short-lived. Seals cut in the Fortification Style constitute the largest proportion of seals documented on the Fortification archive and so attest to a strong, if as yet imperfectly understood, tradition. The Fortification Style may be connected with a native Iranian style in glyptic arts.

The seal of Irtuppiya, PFS 2, shows how an important official in the system can reach outside the normal network of seal engravers to acquire a distinctive seal style unrelated to current trends.

Finally, PFS 7\* and PFS 859\* preserve two of the earliest extant canonized versions of the new official style of the court, one closely related to the formal expression of Achaemenid concepts of world order as found in the monumental architectural reliefs on the Persepolis terrace. While seal art and monumental relief have the same aims (and audience), the Court Style in glyptic clearly was a product of artistic experimentation by a few artists working within the environs (geographical and conceptual) of the seal workshops.

This Court Style in seal art has long been recognized in scholarly circles as the style most distinctly associated with the Achaemenid Persians. The seal

impressions from the Fortification archive show, however, a wide variety in the tastes of the elite down into the early fifth century B.C. The situation just slightly later in the 480s and 470s B.C. is more difficult to evaluate since the Treasury Tablets preserve only a relatively small number of seals. Nevertheless, the seal impressions from the Persepolis Treasury Tablets show a high percentage of seals cut in the Court Style

and also many Greek-inspired designs.<sup>129</sup> The evidence provided by the seal impressions from the Treasury Tablets, in combination with unprovenanced seals from museum collections, suggests that by the second quarter of the fifth century B.C. movements were afoot in the seal workshops that were to lead Achaemenid glyptic into new areas.



## Notes

The groundwork for this article was laid in my Ph.D. dissertation, completed for the Interdepartmental Program in Classical Art and Archaeology at the University of Michigan (Mark B. Garrison, "Seal Workshops and Artists in Persepolis: A Study of Seal Impressions Preserving the Theme of Heroic Encounter on the Persepolis Fortification and Treasury Tablets" [Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1988]). Margaret Cool Root first introduced me to the Achaemenid Persians and the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, and it is through her generosity and kindness that I have been encouraged to work on the Persepolis material with her. Dr. Root has read and commented upon the contents of this article, for which I am extremely grateful. Permission to publish the seal impressions on the Fortification Tablets comes from The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. Over the years, the Persepolis Fortification Tablet Seal Project has received support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, and three units of the University of Michigan: the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, the Office of the Vice President for Research, and the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies. From the latter I am especially pleased to acknowledge a Research Partnership Award in 1987–88. I would also like to thank the Classics Department at Vassar College, where I completed the final draft of this manuscript as the Carl Blegen Fellow. Charles Jones of The Oriental Institute has kindly provided over the last few years much information on the Fortification Tablet archive. For his assistance and support he has my most sincere thanks. I have cited in this study his unpublished manuscript, "Document and Circumstance at the City of the Persians." He also provided all the readings of seal inscriptions contained in this article. The seal inscriptions have been omitted from the line drawings of inscribed seals, although the panels for the inscriptions have been included. In the final publication of the Fortification archive seal impressions, the inscriptions will be included in the collated line drawings. Lorene Sterner, draftsperson for the Persepolis Fortification Tablet Seal Project, did all of the drawings, and I thank her for the opportunity to reproduce them here. Photographs of the Persepolis seal impressions are by the author. Both drawings and photographs of these seal impressions are reproduced here at approximately 1.5 times their actual size. I am especially grateful to Dominique Collon of the British Museum and Edith Porada of Columbia University for expediting the acquisition of photographs. For the rendering of personal names in the Fortification Tablet texts, I have followed the glossed versions contained in R. T. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, OIP 92 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969). Any errors contained in this text rest with the author.

1. See, e.g., H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, ed., *Achaemenid History I: Sources, Structures and Synthesis* (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1987); H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and J. W. Drijvers, eds., *Achaemenid History V: The Roots of the European Tradition* (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1990).
2. See most recently M. C. Root, "Lifting the Veil: Approaches to the Study of Artistic Transmission beyond the Boundaries of Historical Periodization," in *Achaemenid History VIII: Continuity and Change*, ed. A. Kuhrt, H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, and M. C. Root, forthcoming.
3. See especially the study of official Achaemenid art by M. C. Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art: Essays on the*

*Creation of an Iconography of Empire*, Acta Iranica 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1979); the series of Achaemenid History Workshops held over the last ten years has greatly deepened our understanding of the Achaemenid empire on many levels (six volumes have appeared to date, *Achaemenid History I–VI* [Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1987–91]). On issues particularly relevant here, see M. C. Root, "From the Heart: Powerful Persianisms in the Art of the Western Empire," in *Achaemenid History VI: The Persian Empire in the West*, ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1991), 1–25.

4. See, e.g., the remarks of D. Collon, *First Impressions: Cylinder Seals in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 5–7, 108–19.
5. E.g., M. Gibson and R. D. Biggs, eds., *Seals and Sealing in the Ancient Near East*, Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 6 (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1977).
6. For the texts see: G. G. Cameron, *Persepolis Treasury Tablets*, OIP 65 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948); G. G. Cameron, "Persepolis Treasury Tablets Old and New," *JNES* 17 (1958): 161–76; G. G. Cameron, "New Tablets from the Persepolis Treasury," *JNES* 24 (1965): 167–92; W. Hinz, review of *Persepolis Treasury Tablets* by G. G. Cameron, *ZA* 15 (1950): 347–53; W. Hinz, "Zu den Persepolis-Tafelchen," *ZDMG* 110 (1960): 236–51; R. T. Hallock, "New Light from Persepolis," *JNES* 9 (1950): 237–52; R. T. Hallock, "A New Look at the Persepolis Treasury Tablets," *JNES* 19 (1960): 90–100. For the seal impressions see: E. Schmidt, *Persepolis*, vol. 2, *The Contents of the Treasury and Other Discoveries*, OIP 69 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 4–41 and pls. 1–14; E. Porada, review of Schmidt, *Persepolis* 2, *JNES* 20 (1961): 66–71; Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 172–78. In addition to the inscribed texts, 200 sealed "labels" were found. In total 77 seals occur on the corpus of sealed material from the Treasury: 43 cylinder seals and 34 stamp seals/signet rings.
7. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, published 2087 texts (tablet texts preceded with the prefix PF). R. T. Hallock, "Selected Fortification Texts," *Cahiers de la délégation archéologique française en Iran* 8 (1978): 109–36, added another 33 texts (tablet texts preceded with the prefix PFa). See Jones, "Document and Circumstance," 3–5. Before his death Hallock had read and transliterated another 2,586 texts, which will be published by Matthew W. Stolper and Charles Jones of The Oriental Institute (all the texts Hallock had read but not published are preceded with the prefix PFNN). All who study aspects of the Fortification Tablet archive are indebted to Hallock's pioneering work not only on the translation of the Elamite texts but also on the overall functioning of the rationing system as represented in the texts and the seal impressions. The tablets have been the focus of several important specialized studies; for a brief overview of the Fortification Tablets, their place in discussions of the state economy, and a recent bibliography see D. M. Lewis, "The Fortification Texts," in *Achaemenid History IV: Centre and Periphery*, ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1990), 1–6, and Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 161–72. H. Koch, *Verwaltung und Wirtschaft im persischen Kernland zur Zeit der Achämeniden*, Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients 19 (Wiesbaden: L. Reichert, 1990), is a detailed

examination of the workings of the administrative system preserved in the Fortification Tablet texts.

8. The first volume of the publication of the seal impressions that occur on the tablets published by Hallock in 1969 (see n. 7 above) is now nearing completion: M. C. Root and M. B. Garrison, *Seal Impressions on the Persepolis Fortification Tablets: A Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1, *Images of Heroic Encounter*, forthcoming. Hallock discusses the seals in several publications but always focuses on seal use (R. T. Hallock, "The Use of Seals on the Persepolis Fortification Tablets," in *Seals and Sealing*, 127–33; R. T. Hallock, "The Evidence of the Persepolis Tablets," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 2, *The Median and Achaemenid Periods*, ed. I. Gerschevitch [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985], 588–609). For a recent update on the bibliography for the archival use of the seals, see Lewis, "The Fortification Texts," 1–6; also now Koch, *Verwaltung und Wirtschaft*. I have explored the question of seal artists and workshops based upon the evidence of the Persepolis sealings (Garrison, "Seal Workshops," *passim*). Root has begun to address some of the art historical issues that the seal impressions raise: M. C. Root, "Circles of Artistic Programming: Strategies for Studying Creative Process at Persepolis," in *Investigating Artistic Environments in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Ann C. Gunter (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1990), 115–39; "From the Heart," 1–25; "Lifting the Veil," forthcoming.
- I refer to the collated images of the impressed seals as "seals," although they are preserved in fact only as impressions. I preface all seals occurring as impressions on the Fortification archive with the designation "PFS." An inscribed seal is indicated by an asterisk (\*) following the seal number.
9. Some work partially directed along this line of inquiry has been done for the Near East: E. Porada, *Seal Impressions of Nuzi*, Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research 24 (New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1947); D. Collon, *The Seal Impressions from Tell Atchana/Alalakh*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 27 (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1975); E. Porada and P. Lampl, "The Seal Impressions," in M. Weitemeyer, *Some Aspects of the Hiring of Workers in the Sippar Region at the Time of Hammurabi* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1962), 99–133.
10. E.g., M. C. Root and M. B. Garrison, with an appendix by Charles Jones, "Royal Name Seals in the Persian Empire," forthcoming.
11. See the discussion in Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 161–62, and Jones, "Document and Circumstance," 3–7.
12. See n. 7 above. On the texts published by Hallock, some 15,376 people are on the state payroll over the period 509–494 B.C. (Lewis, "Fortification Texts," 2–3). Of those identified by name, the great majority are completely unknown outside of the Fortification Tablet texts and seem generally of low social status. The mass of anonymous workers are "dependent populations," not paid workers. For names preserved in the Fortification archive see M. Mayrhofer, *Onomastica Persepolitana: Das Namengut der Persepolis-Täfelchen*, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte 286 (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1973) and Koch, *Verwaltung und Wirtschaft*, *passim*.
13. The Elamite language has no known cognates and employs a borrowed script; it is attested as a written language only sporadically from the later third millennium B.C. until the fifth century B.C. (Jones, "Document and Circumstance," 7). The Fortification Tablets contain in addition one tablet inscribed in Phrygian, one in Greek, and one in Babylonian. There is also a corpus of approximately 700 Aramaic texts applied in ink. The Treasury Tablets (n. 6 above) are related to the Fortification Tablets by the use of the Elamite language and the appearance of a few of the same officials; four seals occur on both archives: PFS 113\*/PTS 4\*, PFS 71\*/PTS 33\*, PFS 1084\*/PTS 42\*, and PFS 1567\*/PTS 14\*.
14. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, 24–25, PF 691–728, 730–40, 2033–35; Hallock, "Select Fortification Texts," PFA 6; there are eight J Texts in the unpublished PFNN texts.
15. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, 24–25.
16. I discuss the workings of the J Texts in more detail in M. B. Garrison, "A Persepolis Fortification Seal at Susa," forthcoming.
17. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, 24. 1 marris = 10 QA, 1 QA being approximately one quart. Wine and beer are rarely issued as regular rations to work groups. When wine is issued, the normal monthly ration is 1½ QA (see Hallock, "Evidence," 588–609). For weights and measures see Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, 72–74.
18. On PF 729, assigned by Hallock to the J Texts, occur PFS 862 and PFS 863. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, 25, notes that PF 729 was assigned to the J Texts "for want of a better place." In fact, it seems out of place here not only because of the unusual action and the lack of the phrase "dispensed" or "expended before the king" but also because the quality of the two seals, PFS 862 and PFS 863, does not accord with the pattern that emerges from a study of the other seals occurring in the J Texts. PF 729 is best left out of the J Text category. PF 701 and 723 carry illegible seal traces, which probably were PFS 66\* and PFS 7\*, respectively.
19. See below, pp. 14–15, for a possible explanation of the occurrence of PFS 859\* on one J Text.
20. One cattle text, PF 691, is sealed by PFS 859\* rather than by PFS 93\*. See below, pp. 14–15, for possible explanations. P. Amiet, "La glyptique de la fin de l'Élam," *Ars Asiaticus* 28 (1973): 3–26, mistakenly states that PFS 93\* is a personal seal. Tablets with PFS 93\*: PF 692–95, 2033, and ten unpublished PFNN texts. Maximum preserved height of PFS 93\*: 1.95 cm.; circumference: 3.80 cm.; estimated diameter of original cylinder: 1.21 cm.
21. Hallock, "Use of Seals," 128, pl. E(4); Root, *King and Kingship*, 27 and 120; Amiet, "La glyptique," no. 28; Jones, "Document and Circumstance," 10; J. Bollweg, "Protoachämenidische Siegelbilder," *AMI* 21 (1988): 58–63 (esp. 53–58 [no. 1], pl. 30 [1–3]); Root, "From the Heart," 21–22.
22. The inscription has some difficulties, which will be articulated in more detail by Charles Jones in the publication of PFS 93\* in vol. 2 of the catalogue. In brief, he reports: "The sign read as 'x' in the third line of the inscription is certainly not 'ir' as read by Hinz and Koch. The sign closely resembles the



- TAK sign. The equivocal context of almost every exemplar of the TAK sign leaves the reading here, as elsewhere, open to question" (personal communication, April 1992). There is debate concerning not only the identification of this "Cyrus the Anshanite" but also his date. See most recently Bollweg, "Protoachämenidische Siegelbilder," 53–58; R. Schmitt, "Cispis," in *Encyclopædia Iranica*, 5:6, ed. E. Yarshater (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1991), 600–1 (Teispes dated to ca. 675–640 B.C.); and E. Porada, "Cylinder Seals of Iran Preceded by Brief Remarks on Stamp Seals of the Chalcolithic Period and the Earliest Bronze Age," in *Encyclopædia Iranica*, forthcoming. I thank Dr. Porada for permission to consult her manuscript and cite it here.
23. With the exception of PFS 859\*, the personal seals (PFS 51, PFS 38, and PFS 2) also occur outside of the J Texts on many other types of transactions. The pattern of seal application in relation to the names mentioned in the accompanying texts allows us to feel very secure in associating these seal images to these specific individuals.
  24. Hallock, "Use of Seals," 128. See also Hallock, "Evidence," 608; Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, 24; Hallock, "Select Fortification Texts," 113; W. Hinz, "Achämenidische Hofverwaltung," ZA 61 (1971): 261–311 (esp. 298–99); Jones, "Document and Circumstance," 10; H. Koch, "'Hofschatzwarte' und 'Schatzhäuser' in der Persis," ZA 71 (1981): 232–47 (234 identifies Irdabama as a wife of Darius). H. Koch, "Zu der Lohnverhältnissen der Dareioszeit in Persien," in *Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte der Achämenidenzeit und ihr Fortleben*, AMI Ergbd. 10, ed. H. Koch and D. N. Mackenzie (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1983), 19–35 (esp. 30), and Koch, *Verwaltung und Wirtschaft*, 269, identify Irdabama as a queen. M. Brosius, "Royal and Non-Royal Women in Achaemenid Persia (559–331 B.C.)," (D. Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1991), 134–52, 198–99, concludes that the exact position of Irdabama within the royal family cannot be determined but that she was certainly very highly placed.
  25. PF 735–40. Maximum preserved height of PFS 51: 2.25 cm.; circumference: 4.15 cm.; estimated diameter of original cylinder: 1.32 cm.
  26. See n. 7 above for the PFa texts. The seal also occurs on six unpublished PFNN texts.
  27. The transactions could conceivably involve not rations from the royal storehouses controlled by the three office seals PFS 7\*, PFS 93\*, and PFS 66\* but rations from the stores that the women have on their estates. This seems unlikely, however, given the use of the special phrases "dispensed for" and "expended in behalf of." For PFS 2 and PFS 859\* see below, pp. 12–13 and 14–15, respectively.
  28. Root, "From the Heart," 21–22, also discusses this seal.
  29. E.g., the lions in the famous lion hunt from a chariot, the wild asses in the wild ass hunt, and the gazelle in the scene where Assurbanipal hides in a pit awaiting the arrival of a herd of gazelle (J. Reade, *Assyrian Sculpture* [London: British Museum, 1983], figs. 83, 88, and 89–90). Assurbanipal (ca. 668–627 B.C.) and Cyrus the son of Teispes (ca. 650–630 B.C.), to whom PFS 93\* belongs, were contemporaries (see Bollweg, "Protoachämenidische Siegelbilder," 55–56, for the dates of Cyrus son of Teispes).
  30. Amiet, "La glyptique," 15–24. See also Root, "From the Heart," 21–22.
  31. There are two groups of sealed Neo-Elamite tablets from Susa. One series (16 different seal designs) occurs on 299 economic tablets found in 1901 by de Morgan on the Acropolis near the small temple built by Shutruk-Nahunte II (seal impressions = Amiet, "La glyptique," nos. 1–16). The other series (7 different seal designs) occurs on seven tablets found by de Mecquenem in 1909 under the Palace of Darius (seal impressions = Amiet, "La glyptique," nos. 17–23). The exact stratigraphic and chronological relationship of these tablets to datable features on the Susa Acropolis is unknown. In his publication of the seven texts found under the palace of Darius (=V. Scheil, *Textes élamites-anzanites*, MDP 11 [Paris: E. Leroux, 1911], nos. 301–7), Scheil added two tablet texts of unknown date and provenance (nos. 299 and 300), a Neo-Elamite tablet text from the Acropolis (no. 309), and a tablet text (no. 308) of unknown provenance at Susa carrying an impression of PFS 7\* (see below, pp. 13–15, and Garrison, "A Persepolis Fortification Seal at Susa," forthcoming). Amiet, "La glyptique," passim, concludes that the two series of tablets and their seal impressions represent two different stages of Neo-Elamite glyptic in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.: an earlier phase associated with the impressions on the tablets found near the temple on the Acropolis and a later phase associated with the impressions on the tablets found under the Palace of Darius. P. de Miroschedji, "Notes sur la glyptique de la fin de l'Élam," RAssy 76 (1982): 51–63, places both sets of tablets and their seal impressions ca. 650–600 B.C., continuing on down into the sixth century B.C. M.-J. Steve, "La Fin de l'Élam: à propos d'une empreinte de sceau-cylindre," *Studia Iranica* 15 (1986): 7–21, lumps both series into the latest phase of Neo-Elamite glyptic, which he labels Neo-Elamite III B (605–539 B.C.). See also the discussion in Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 107–19 and 515–17; Bollweg, "Protoachämenidische Siegelbilder," passim; E. Porada, "Cylinder Seals of Iran," forthcoming.
  32. Amiet, "La glyptique," nos. 1, 3, 5, and 6.
  33. Amiet, "La glyptique," nos. 2, 7, 13, and 17.
  34. Amiet, "La glyptique," nos. 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, perhaps 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22.
  35. Amiet, "La glyptique," nos. 16 (Susa), 22 (Susa), 51 (Pierpont Morgan), 53 (Brussels); Bollweg, "Protoachämenidische Siegelbilder," no. 7 (Tehran).
  36. As documented in PFS 93\*, PFS 51, in Amiet, "La glyptique," nos. 16 and 22, and in the unprovenanced seals nos. 51–59. Porada, "Cylinder Seals of Iran," forthcoming, has traced the theme of the mounted huntsman back to Neo-Assyrian Linear Style seals of the ninth–eighth centuries B.C. and suggests that the theme is ultimately of Assyrian inspiration.
  37. Amiet, "La glyptique," nos. 14 and 15.
  38. Amiet, "La glyptique," no. 21 and the unprovenanced seals nos. 62–66.

39. Amiet, "La glyptique," nos. 11–13, and the unprovenanced seals nos. 34–44. The intertwined animal groups provide the one exception to the general tendency seen in "Neo-Elamite" glyptic to avoid overlapping of figures.
40. For the political picture in southwestern Elam at this time see E. Carter and M. W. Stolper, *Elam: Surveys of Political History and Archaeology*, University of California Publications of Near Eastern Studies 25 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 44–56 and 181–89.
41. Amiet, *Glyptique susienne*, MDAI 43 (Paris: P. Guethner, 1972), nos. 2121–59; Amiet, "La glyptique," 3.
42. Amiet, "La glyptique," no. 34.
43. Note also the comments of Amiet, "La glyptique," 24–26, and Amiet, *Glyptique susienne*, 275. This is not the place to discuss what the identification of the "Early Persian" style implies politically and culturally for our reconstruction of affairs in southwestern Iran after Assurbanipal's sack of Susa in 646 B.C. The late history of Elam has been extensively discussed in several recent articles (most recently see P. de Miroschedji, "La fin de l'Élam: essai d'analyse et d'interprétation," *Iranica Antiqua* 25 [1990]: 47–95; Carter and Stolper, *Elam*, for a survey of the earlier and later periods).  
 Future studies will certainly strengthen the case for the impact of this "Early Persian" style on Achaemenid glyptic as represented in the Fortification Tablets. E.g., the archer series of Achaemenid coins strikingly evokes the kneeling archer as preserved on the Susa and Persepolis seal impressions (see M. C. Root, "The Persian Archer at Persepolis: Aspects of Chronology, Style and Symbolism," in *L'Or perse et l'histoire grecque*, ed. R. Descat, *Revue des Études anciennes* 91 [Paris: Belles lettres, 1989], 33–50). Root, "From the Heart," 20–22, explores briefly the question of the relationship of "Neo-Elamite" glyptic and the troublesome Graeco-Persian style. My identification of that style as "Early Persian" adds an interesting element to that question. The Graeco-Persian class of seals will warrant thorough restudy with the publication of the Persepolis seal impressions.
44. See also the comments in Root, *King and Kingship*, 28–42.
45. An important discussion on transmission of artistic styles can be found in Root, "Circles," 132, and Root, "Lifting the Veil," forthcoming.
46. See also the comments below, pp. 8–10.
47. Maximum preserved height of PFS 38: 1.90 cm.; circumference: 4.15 cm.; estimated diameter of original cylinder: 1.32 cm. The seal also occurs on six unpublished PFNN texts.
48. See also Hallock, "Evidence," 598 and 608 (corrects the earlier identification of Irtašduna with a daughter of Darius); Hallock, "Use of Seals," 128; Hallock, "Select Fortification Texts," 110, 113, and 121; Hinz, *Achämenidische Hofverwaltung*, 298–99; Jones, "Document and Circumstance," 10; Koch, *Verwaltung und Wirtschaft*, 16, 21, 29, 82, 94, 106, 144, 148, 150–51, 154, 178, 199, 204, 226, 291; Brosius, "Royal and Non-Royal Women," 29–31, 42, 62–69, 103–4, 131–34, 197–98.
49. D. Lewis, *Sparta and Persia*, Cincinnati Classical Studies 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 27, suggests that the queen's estate at Kuknaka was originally the estate of a pretender who challenged Darius' rule in his first year; see also Brosius, "Royal and Non-Royal Women," 131–34. For measures in the Fortification Tablets, see n. 17 above.
50. For Irtašduna and her son Arsames, see Hinz, "Achämenidische Hofverwaltung," 423; Lewis, *Sparta and Persia*, 22.
51. Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 203–7, 476, 477, 480, and 520; M. C. Root, *Crowning Glories: Persian Kingship and the Power of Creative Continuity* (Ann Arbor: Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, 1990), 37.
52. Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 196–243 and 518–24.
53. Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 91–105 and 499–514. The forthcoming publication of the Neo-Assyrian seals in the British Museum by D. Collon should mark a valuable contribution to the study of Neo-Assyrian glyptic art. The questions of the origins of the Modeled Style and its particular Assyrian and/or Babylonian features need much careful research. At the moment we have few securely provenanced seals or seal impressions from which a coherent discussion might emerge. I have traced the earliest securely dated examples of the Modeled Style to mid-ninth-century B.C. Assyria in the form of the Assyrian royal seal type (cf. fig. 13, a bulla carrying the Assyrian royal seal type dated by the accompanying text to the reign of Sargon II); see, e.g., A. J. Sachs, "The Assyrian Royal-Seal Type," *Iraq* 15 (1953): 167–70. I have become increasingly suspicious that we cannot ascribe specific stylistic features to Assyria as against Babylonia. There may be certain iconographic traits that are specifically Assyrian or Babylonian (e.g., types of clothing or headgear), but the whole question needs to be readdressed. A possible line of inquiry might be to assemble all inscribed seals from the period to determine whether seals with Babylonian or Assyrian inscriptions show stylistic or iconographic characteristics that seem diagnostic. There are many problems with this approach as well, since an inscription probably says more about the identity of the seal owner than about the style of the seal design. In several helpful and stimulating conversations on this subject, Edith Porada reminds me that whether Assyrian or Babylonian in origin, the Modeled Style would have been continued after the fall of the Assyrian capitals in Babylonian workshops. Thus, distinctive Babylonian features could have entered at this time.
54. Forty-eight Modeled Style seals will be presented in fascicle I, representing 14.63 percent of the total (328 seals).
55. Cf. Collon, *First Impressions*, figs. 344–46, 573, 618, 739, 804, 856, and 883, for the Pleiades; figs. 344–45, 573, 823, and 881 (probably Neo-Babylonian), for the rhombus.
56. Cf. Collon, *First Impressions*, fig. 357 (seal impression found at Nimrud dated to 650 B.C.), for the bowled vegetal device with a figure in a winged disk above it (the seal fig. 358 preserves a more schematic treatment of the same motif). G. Herrmann, *Ivories from Room SW 37 Fort Shalmanesar*, IFN 4:1 (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1986), nos. 153, 155, 167–84, 602, 1223–26; M. Mallowan and G. Herrmann, *Furniture from SW. 7 Fort Shalmanesar*, IFN 3



- (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1974), nos. 2, 21–22, 89–96.
57. Cf. Collon, *First Impressions*, figs. 184 (Mari), 190 (Minet el Beida, Syria), 314 (Minet el Beida, Syria), and 776–77 (unprovenanced).
  58. Perhaps the uncle of Darius the Great. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, 23. Hallock, "Evidence," 589–93, 598, 606, and 609; R. T. Hallock, "The Persepolis Fortification Archive," *Orientalia* 92 (1973): 320–23; Hallock, "Use of Seals," 128–29 and pl. E(6); Hallock, "Select Fortification Texts," 113; D. M. Lewis, "Datis the Mede," *JHS* 100 (1980): 194–95; W. M. Sumner, "Achaemenid Settlement in the Persepolis Plain," *AJA* 90 (1986): 3–31 (esp. 26–27); Hinz, "Achämenidische Hofverwaltung," 271, 288, 301–3; Lewis, "Persepolis Fortification Texts," 1–2; Koch, *Verwaltung und Wirtschaft*, 224–26.
  59. As specifically stated in PF 2067 and 2068. For PFS 9\*, see Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 241, 243, 262, 264–68, 271, 272, 282, and 525. The Aramaic inscription reads: prnk; "Parnaka." Maximum preserved height of PFS 9\*: 1.25 cm.; circumference: 2.20 cm.; estimated diameter of original cylinder: 0.70 cm.
  60. For PFS 16\*, see Hallock, "Use of Seals," pl. E(7); Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 201, 204, 217–23, 238, 249, 256, 361, 380, 381, 400, 452, 478–79, 493, and 521–22; Root, "From the Heart," 22; Root, "Circles," 130–31. The Aramaic inscription reads: prnk /br /rsm; "Parnaka, son of Arsam." Maximum preserved height of PFS 16\*: 1.75 cm.; circumference: 3.05 cm.; estimated diameter of original cylinder: 0.97 cm.
  61. Margaret Root has recently written very eloquently on the question of individualism in Achaemenid Persia: Root, "From the Heart," 2, 12–13, 19–20, and 22; Root, "Lifting the Veil," forthcoming.
  62. See the important discussions in A. Kuhrt, "The Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid Imperial Policy," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 25 (1983): 83–97; A. Kuhrt, "Ceremonial, Conquest, Usurpation: From Babylon to Persia," in *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, ed. D. N. Cannadine and S. R. F. Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 25–55.
  63. Hallock, "Use of Seals," 127, pl. E(3). Jones, "Document and Circumstance," 9–10. Tablets with PFS 66\*: PF 699–704 and seven unpublished PFNN texts.
  64. Hallock, "Use of Seals," 127–28.
  65. There are at least two unpublished PFNN tablets that carry PFS 66b\*.
  66. I prefer at the moment to reserve judgment on which seal occurs on PF 704, which dates to 501–500 B.C. and may carry PFS 66b\*. In any case, it does not negate the general observation that PFS 66a\* does not occur after 502 B.C.
  67. See, e.g., the "dynastic" seal from Ugarit (C. F.-A. Schaeffer, ed., *Le Palais royal d'Ugarit*, vol. 3, *Textes accadiens et hourrites des archives est, ouest et centrales*, Mission de Ras Shamra 6 (Paris: Impr. nationale, 1955), xxiii–xxvi, xlii–xliii, pls. XI (fig. 14), XVI (figs. 22–23), and XVII (figs. 24–25). A few other seals in the Fortification archive also seem to exist in duplicate (e.g., PFS 12a and 12b). See M. C. Root and M. B. Garrison, "The Persepolis Fortification Tablet Seal Impressions: An Interim Inventory of Seal Numbers and Associated Tablets," forthcoming.
  68. "The sealing is here restored from two incomplete impressions. There is no word division in the inscription although the [m]n may be separate. The first letter, on the very edge of the sealing, may be a m but it is very incomplete in the sealing. The whole inscription is in very minute letters" (unpublished manuscript on the Aramaic texts from the Fortification archive by R. A. Bowman). Charles Jones suggests that the second word in the inscription is a personal name, but Bowman did not enter it into his glossary, and no known parallels exist in either Aramaic or Elamite; the exact manner in which the word was vocalized cannot be determined (personal communication, April 1992).
  69. Maximum preserved height of PFS 66a\*: 1.80 cm.; circumference: 3.45 cm.; estimated diameter of original cylinder: 1.10 cm.
  70. Maximum preserved height of PFS 66b\*: 1.50 cm.; circumference: 3.70 cm.; estimated diameter of original cylinder: 1.18 cm.
  71. Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 258–368, 481–95, and 525–28.
  72. Of the 328 seals that will be catalogued in fascicle I, 185 are cut in the Fortification Style (56.40 percent).
  73. See also the remarks below, pp. 15–17.
  74. Occurrences of PFS 2: PF 15, 113, 442, 465–66, 540, 542, 544, 585, 598, 613, 832, 1000–1, 1049–53, 1055–57, 1065, 1067–73, 1187–89, 1605–6, 1651, 1681, 1699–1700, 1709, 1715–16, 1748, 1845–48, and thirty-three unpublished PFNN texts. Height of PFS 2: 1.60 cm.; circumference: 2.40 cm.; estimated diameter of original cylinder: 0.76 cm. For Irtuppiya see Hallock, "Evidence," 597 and 600; Hallock, "Use of Seals," 131; Hinz, "Achämenidische Hofverwaltung," 286–87 (identified as the "Hofspeicherwart" and director of Hinz's Abteilung I, "Cerealien," of the "Hofintendantur"); Koch, *Verwaltung und Wirtschaft*, 241–43 (identified as the Director of the "Intendantur" of the administrative region in Elam [her region VI]).
  75. PF 709, 711–13, 717, 724–25, and PFa 6 (for PFa numbers see n. 7 above).
  76. The text reads: "962.2 BAR [of] grain, [in accordance with] a sealed document of Irtuppiya, 7 cattle in pasture(?), dispensed in behalf of the king, received. [At] Sursunkiri. In the fifth [Elamite] month, the sixth, the seventh, the eighth, 20 days of the ninth, [for] a total of 4 months, 20 days, [in] the 21st year."
  77. For discussions of Irtuppiya and his role in the system, see the references above, n. 74. Koch, *Verwaltung und Wirtschaft*, 243, suggests that the cattle are being fattened in preparation for the arrival of the king's retinue, a suggestion that is

- not incompatible with the one proposed here. She does not offer an explanation for the unusual occurrence of PFS 2 on PF 710.
78. Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 447–50. PFS 740 and PFS 690 seem to be debased versions of the style of PFS 2, suggesting copyists or perhaps a master and apprentice. PFS 23 is closer to PFS 2 and may be from the same hand.
  79. As mentioned, PFS 23 may be a product of the same hand. For a somewhat related treatment of human heads see B. Buchanan and P. R. S. Moorey, *Catalogue of the Ancient Near Eastern Seals in the Ashmolean Museum*, vol. 3, *The Iron Age Stamp Seals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), no. 375 (classified in "Elaborate" Neo-Imperial Stamp Seals, Mainly of the 7th c. B.C., Modeled Style").
  80. J. Boardman, *Greek Gems and Finger Rings* (New York: Abrams, 1970), 305.
  81. I am preparing a detailed treatment of the Court Style as found in the Persepolis sealings: Mark B. Garrison, "The Court Style in Achaemenid Seal Art," forthcoming. For now see Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 11, 383–419, 471–92, and 528–30.
  82. Hallock, "Use of Seals," 127–28; Jones, "Document and Circumstance," 9–10. Known occurrences of PFS 7\* (corrected from Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, 78): PF 697–709, 711–27, 2034, and PFa 6; and twenty-six unpublished PFNN texts. Add also an administrative text of Achaemenid date discovered at Susa (Delaporte, *Musée du Louvre*, vol. 1, pl. 48 [20] = Scheil, *Textes élamites-anzanites*, no. 308; see Garrison, "A Persepolis Fortification Seal at Susa," forthcoming).
  83. The J Texts collectively suggest that the offices represented by PFS 7\*, PFS 66\*, and PFS 93\* oversee the delivery of commodities that are to be consumed. The application of the office seal signifies that the transaction in fact took place and that the commodities have been received. These transactions occur at a wide variety of places. For more detail, see Garrison, "A Persepolis Fortification Seal at Susa," forthcoming.
  84. Discussed with photograph on microfiche in Hallock, "Use of Seals," 127–28, pl. E (3). See also Root, *King and Kingship*, 121; Root, *Crowning Glories*, 36–37; Root, "Persian Archer," 40–42, figs. 2–3; Hinz, "Achämenidische Hofverwaltung," 299–300; Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 220, 255, 367, 372, 376, 377, 390, 391, 394–401, 414, 416, 474, 475–81, 489, 491, and 529–30. The drawing reproduced as fig. 22 here is collated from 31 impressions of PFS 7\* studied to date. The design is almost complete. Estimated height of original cylinder: 2.85 cm.; circumference: 4.80 cm.; estimated diameter of original cylinder: 1.52 cm.
  85. See the discussion in M. Roaf, *Sculptures and Sculptors at Persepolis, Iran* 21 (London: British Institute of Persian Studies, 1983), 133–38, and Root, *King and Kingship*, passim, esp., 64–65, 122, 148 n. 57, 166 n. 17, 169–71, 182 n. 2, 214–15, and 246.
  86. The inscription occurs with minor variations on a number of seals and seal impressions from Persepolis and elsewhere; see R. Schmitt, *Altpersische Siegel-Inschriften*, Sitzungsberichte der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 381 (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981), 22 sub SDe; M. Mayrhofer, *Supplement zur Sammlung der altpersischen Inschriften*, Sitzungsberichte der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 328 (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1978), 16 sub 3.11.1.
  87. PFS 11\*, PFS 113\*, and PFS 1683\* also have inscriptions of Darius. PFS 113\* is the same seal that occurs on the Treasury Tablets as PTS 4\*.
  88. PTS 1\*, PTS 2\*, PTS 3\*, and the famous London Darius cylinder, shown here in fig. 32 (J. Yoyotte, "La provenance du cylindre de Darius, [BM 89.132]," *RA* 46 [1952]: 165–67; D. J. Wiseman, *Cylinder Seals of Western Asia* [London: Batchworth Press, 1958], pl. 100; Root, *King and Kingship*, 120–21; Collon, *First Impressions*, fig. 558). For royal name seals in the Achaemenid Persian period see M. C. Root and M. B. Garrison, "Royal Name Seals of the Persian Empire," forthcoming.
  89. See Roaf, *Sculptures and Sculptors*, 131–33, and Root, *King and Kingship*, 92–93, 99, 117, 121–22, 171, 304, and 306–7, for Achaemenid crowns.
  90. In isolating hands and workshops in the seal impressions preserved on the Persepolis Fortification archive, I have identified several important artists working in the early, formative phases of the Court Style. I have called the artist of PFS 7\* the Baradkama Master, after the owner of another one of his seals, PTS 4\*/PFS 113\*. To the same hand belong PFS 819, PFS 1684\*, PTS 3\*, PTS 10, and PTS 11\*. Results of my hand attributions will be published in a future monograph. For the Baradkama Master see Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 386–91 and 394–401.
  91. The text is a little unusual: three cattle in pasture belonging to the people of Umbartas were dispensed in behalf of the king by Irdasatis. The cattle are described as being in pasture and belonging to the people of a particular place, specifications that never occur with cattle in other J Texts overseen by PFS 93\*. In general, Hallock operated on the assumption that irregularities and modifications in transaction syntax in the Fortification Tablet texts signified that something different was happening. Perhaps PFS 859\* is used here because the cattle are controlled by a person/office of a particular place (Umbartas) or situation (cattle in pasture?). I prefer, however, the reconstruction given in the following text.
  92. Maximum preserved height of PFS 859\*: 1.15 cm.; maximum preserved circumference: 3.15 cm.
  93. Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 414–15, 479, and 491.
  94. E. Schmidt, *Persepolis*, vol. 1, *Structures, Reliefs, Inscriptions*, OIP 68 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pls. 144–46. Note the same theme copied later on the door jambs from the Throne Hall (Schmidt, *Persepolis* 1, pls. 114–17) and the "Harem" of Xerxes (Schmidt, *Persepolis* 1, pls.



- 195–96). For a discussion of the scene in monumental art at Persepolis see Root, *King and Kingship*, 303–8; in seal art of Mesopotamia see Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 24–160.
95. The seal design could have copied the wall relief, the wall relief the seal, or both could have been inspired by another source.
  96. Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 352–56, 485–86, 490–91. Maximum preserved height of PFS 34: 1.20 cm.; circumference: 3.20 cm.; estimated diameter of original cylinder: 1.02 cm. Maximum preserved height of PFS 168: 1.15 cm.; maximum preserved circumference: 2.80 cm.
  97. Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 363–68, 487–91.
  98. Maximum preserved height of PFS 52: 1.75 cm.; circumference: 3.30 cm.; estimated diameter of original cylinder: 1.05 cm.
  99. Maximum preserved height of PFS 95: 1.25 cm.; maximum preserved circumference: 2.05 cm.
  100. Maximum preserved height of PFS 102: 1.90 cm.; circumference: 2.90 cm.; estimated diameter of original cylinder: 0.92 cm.
  101. Maximum preserved height of PFS 301: 1.75 cm.; maximum preserved circumference: 2.20 cm.
  102. A more detailed exposition of the origins of the Court Style will appear in my "The Court Style in Achaemenid Persian Glyptic," forthcoming. For now see Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 383–419 and 471–539.
  103. Garrison, "The Court Style in Achaemenid Persian Glyptic," forthcoming; Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 346–83 and 475–92.
  104. For the monumental architectural reliefs see the analysis by Root, *King and Kingship*, passim. For the seals see Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 383–420, 471–92, and 528–30.
  105. Root, "Persian Archer," 33–50.
  106. Root, "Persian Archer," 45, has suggested that the archer series of coins may also have its roots in the seal workshops that were serving the Persepolis administrators.
  107. Horses figure prominently on the Apadana, and many subject peoples bring the riding habit to the king in the same reliefs. The letter of Arsam commissioning more equestrian sculptures shows that equestrian groups existed in freestanding sculpture (see the comments of Root, *King and Kingship*, 129–30, on lost freestanding monumental equestrian groups). My point here is the marked difference between official imagery of Cyrus son of Teispes and Darius I. The latter is strongly emblematic and focuses on the central image of the Great King.
  108. Root, *King and Kingship*, passim.
  109. This list is not all-inclusive; see the discussion and catalogue in Root, *King and Kingship*, 43–76.
  110. See the analysis of Root, *King and Kingship*, 208–13.
  111. Root, *King and Kingship*, 74–76.
  112. See Root, *King and Kingship*, 49–58, and D. Stronach, *Pasargadae: A Report on the Excavations Conducted by the British Institute of Persian Studies from 1961 to 1963* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 93–97. The debate centers around whether the inscriptions (CMc) naming Cyrus the Great on the door jamb reliefs at Palace P were cut at the time of Cyrus or added later by Darius (P. Lecoq, "Le Problème de l'écriture cunéiforme vieux-perse," in *Commémoration Cyrus: Hommage Universel III*, Acta Iranica 3 [Leiden: Brill, 1974], 25–107, esp. 52–56, has argued for dating the inscriptions to Cyrus; D. Stronach, "On the Genesis of the Old-Persian Cuneiform Script," in *Contributions à l'histoire de l'Iran: Mélanges offerts à Jean Perrot*, ed. F. Vallat [Paris: Editions Recherche sur les civilisations, 1990], 195–203, for Darius.). The reliefs in question show drapery with a vertical pleat terminating in an omega-shaped hem and with radiating diagonal folds—conventions similar to those found later at Persepolis during the reign of Darius as well as in late Archaic Greek sculpture.
  113. Root, *King and Kingship*, 56–58.
  114. I. Winter, "Legitimation of Authority through Image and Legend: Seals Belonging to Officials in the Administrative Bureaucracy of the Ur III State," in *The Organization of Power: Aspects of Bureaucracy in the Ancient Near East*, 2nd ed., ed. M. Gibson and R. D. Biggs, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 46 (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1991), 59–100.
  115. See Root, *King and Kingship*, passim, and Root, "Circles," 130–31, for the sculptural program at Persepolis. The question of the relationship between seal art and architectural relief at Persepolis is briefly explored in Garrison, "Seal Workshops," 383–85 and 391–93. A more comprehensive treatment should be possible after further study of the seals preserved in the Fortification archive.
  116. Roaf, *Sculptures and Sculptors*, 127–49, argues for a date very late in the reign of Darius, whereas Root, *King and Kingship*, 83–86, urges acknowledgment of much activity in planning and implementation earlier in the reign.
  117. An Archer coin of type II (crowned full figure shooting) was used to seal the transaction on PF 1495 (dated to 500 B.C.), thus confirming the date traditionally ascribed to these coins; see M. C. Root, "Evidence from Persepolis for the Dating of Persian and Archaic Greek Coinage," *NC* 148 (1988): 1–12. The Daric also occurs on one unpublished PFNN text.
  118. If the Palace P reliefs at Pasargadae do indeed date to the time of Cyrus—and at the moment there is no cogent argument against such a date—then this program of visual imagery dates back into the 540s or 530s B.C.
  119. As Roaf, *Sculptures and Sculptors*, 150, suggests, the artisans need not be engaged in activity at Persepolis, although I think it highly likely that they are. See also Root, "Evidence from Persepolis," passim, for a recent overview of the debate

over the date of the foundation deposits for the Apadana. She confirms the pre-510 B.C. date often suggested for that deposit.

120. For the London Darius cylinder see n. 88 above.
121. Traditionally identified as the source of the most Graeco-Persian gems; see, among many references, Boardman, *Greek Gems*, 303–57 (for the London Darius cylinder in particular cf., e.g., figs. 830–31 [animal form], 824 [drill-work], 829, 834–35 [four points on the crown], 844 [hatching on the lion's mane]). For recent redirection of the inquiry see Root, "From the Heart," 13–15. The Daskyleion seal impressions, around 400 fragmentary and complete bullae securely provenanced from a satrapal capital in Asia Minor, preserve some examples of the Court Style, but stylistically they resemble neither the London Darius cylinder nor the Persepolitan Court Style. The Daskyleion seal impressions date, however, later than Darius I (probably late fifth century B.C., although the material has yet to be published in detail, and D. Kaptan-Bayburtluoglu, "A Group of Seal Impressions on the Bullae from Ergili/Daskyleion," *Epigraphica Anatolica* 16 [1990]: 15–27, hints obliquely at dates ranging from the early fifth century B.C. to the fourth century B.C.). Whatever the date of the Daskyleion impressions, I suspect that there may have been a series of provincial workshops serving the major bureaucratic centers of the Persian empire for most of the period of Achaemenid rule. For the Daskyleion impressions see: M. Mellink, "Archaeology in Asia Minor," *AJA* 59 (1955): 235–36; E. Akurgal, *Die Kunst Anatoliens von Homer bis Alexander* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1961), 171, fig. 122; K. Balkan, "Inscribed Bullae from Daskyleion-Ergili," *Anatolia* 4 (1959): 123–28; Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, *The Anatolian Civilisations* (Istanbul: Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 1983), 2:69–71.
122. A very large number of the preserved seal impressions on the Fortification Tablets are of a distinctly lower artistic quality (or clearly fewer resources were expended in their production) than the group of seals from the J Texts.
123. If we may take the Treasury Tablets as a valid yardstick of taste. In the seal impressions preserved on the Treasury archive (492–458 B.C.), dated just slightly later than the latest tablets in the Fortification archive, the Court Style is by far the most commonly occurring style; all the highest-ranking officials have seals cut in this style. There may be certain biases in the sample as represented in the Treasury Tablets, given the small number of transactions and officials involved and the elite status of many of those officials. The seal impressions from the Treasury Tablets include only 77 individual seal designs. Perhaps the great variety of seal styles observed in the Fortification Tablets continued down into the fifth century B.C., but the evidence of their use has been lost. The next major archive of sealed documents, the Murashu archive (455–403 B.C.), comes from a small family banking interest in Nippur and thus cannot be compared with the seal impressions from either the Fortification or Treasury Tablets. Court Style seals occur in this archive, as well as many local Babylonian products and some Greek-style seal designs (published in part by L. Legrain, *The Culture of the Babylonians from Their Seals in the Collection of the Museum*, The University Museum Publication of the Babylonian Section 14 [Philadelphia: The University Museum, 1925], 315–49 and pls. 33–45). The seal impressions from the Murashu archive are currently under study (L. Bregstein, "Sealing Practices in the Murashu Archive," U. Penn. diss.).





## A ROCK RELIEF OF FATH ʿALĪ SHĀH IN SHIRAZ

BY JUDITH LERNER

ROCK RELIEF CARVING HAS HAD A LONG HISTORY IN IRAN, beginning in the third millennium B.C. and reaching its apogee under the Achaemenid and Sasanian dynasties (ca. 550–331 B.C. and A.D. 224–651). With the establishment of Islamic rule in the middle of the seventh century, rock carving on a monumental scale seems to have been abandoned,<sup>1</sup> only to be revived, after more than a millennium, in the early nineteenth century by the Qājār Dynasty (1210/1796–1345/1925). This revival was a conscious attempt by the new dynasty to associate itself with the glories of Iran's imperial past. Like the Achaemenid and Sasanian reliefs, those of the Qājārs are expressions of royalty. Their subject matter echoes the two major themes of the Achaemenid and, in particular, of the Sasanian reliefs: enthronement and the hunt.<sup>2</sup>

The discovery of Iran's pre-Islamic imperial past

and revival of its visual imagery are phenomena that deserve fuller treatment than can be given in this context. For now, I offer a single example of the Qājār revival of the venerable artistic tradition of rock carving, a relief of Fath ʿAlī Shāh in Shiraz, and dedicate it to Oleg Grabar. Such use of the past—the appropriation of forms and symbols belonging to earlier cultures and traditions—is a subject that has informed much of his writing and is one about which he has eloquently informed us.

An enthronement scene, the relief is one of eight known Qājār rock carvings and one of seven that date to Fath ʿAlī Shāh's reign (1212/1798–1250/1834).<sup>3</sup> It is located in the narrow defile called the *Tang-i Allāhū Akbar*, at the northeast edge of Shiraz on the Isfahan road, the main approach to Shiraz from the north (fig. 1). From that direction, the relief, along with



FIG. 1. Western side of the *Tang-i Allāhū Akbar*, Shiraz, 1976. The relief of Fath ʿAlī Shāh is marked by an arrow.





FIG. 2. Relief of Fath 'Alī Shāh, complete view (approx. 4.52 m. high and 3.48 m. long).



another, appears on the right side of the *tang*, above the Qurʾān Gate, which spans the roadway and provides travelers with their first and most spectacular view of Shiraz. A series of artificial terraces, bearing the tombs of a fourteenth-century poet and a fifteenth-century *vazīr*, planted with gardens and watered by the remains of the Ruknābād, rises from the road. On the uppermost terrace, carved into the narrow face of one of the tombs—a stone-lined grotto—is the other relief. It shows a bearded and armored horseman shooting an arrow into the head of a lion engaged in mauling a man.<sup>4</sup> Further along the terrace, towards Shiraz, a large square panel has been carved from the mountainside to show an enthroned Fath ʿAlī Shāh (fig. 2).

The relief was first mentioned by Lt. James Alexander, a member of Col. MacDonald Kinneir's ambassadorial suite, who visited the spot in 1825: "his Majesty, Futteh Allee Shah, seated on his throne, with the Heir Apparent standing near him."<sup>5</sup> As the earliest—and, until the mid nineteenth century, the only—mention of the relief, Alexander's description and attribution will be crucial to my discussion

and interpretation. No contemporary Persian source cites it or the horseman relief, nor do the late nineteenth-century authors Ḥasan-i Fasāʾī and Forsat al-Daula, who describe the other monuments and geography of Shiraz.<sup>6</sup>

Although the relief is now greatly damaged by water seepage from behind the rock surface, the main parts of the composition can still be discerned. Fath ʿAlī Shāh kneels on a *takht*, or platform throne, that is supported by two winged figures; two male figures stand to either side of him. His features and the details of his costume can be recognized from his many painted portraits: long luxuriant beard, heavy eyebrows above almond-shaped eyes, a jeweled *bazu-band* on each arm, and the Kiani crown with its three distinctive feathered aigrettes (fig. 3). Of the paint that originally colored the relief, only some black survives, emphasizing the Shāh's eyebrows and parts of his crown and coloring the hair of the other two figures.

The figure on the right, standing to the Shāh's left, is also bearded and crowned (fig. 4). He wears a long, plain coat of characteristic Qājār cut, nipped in at the



FIG. 3. Relief of Fath ʿAlī Shāh. Detail of Fath ʿAlī Shāh.



FIG. 4. Relief of Fath ʿAlī Shāh. Detail of Bearded Prince.





FIG. 5. Relief of Faḥ 'Alī Shāh. Detail of Young Prince.

waist with bell-shaped skirt, its bodice trimmed with a pearly collar and band down the front. He, too, sports a *bazuband* on each arm. Against his body he clutches a long sword, much in the manner of the earlier Sasanian kings.<sup>7</sup> The scabbard rests along his left side, while a dagger protrudes from his girdle. The jeweled crown distinguishes him as one of Faḥ 'Alī Shāh's numerous sons, its single plume identifies him as 'Abbās Mīrzā, the Crown Prince (1213/1799–1249/1833).<sup>8</sup>

To the Shāh's right stands a beardless youth with his hands clasped before him (fig. 5). He, too, wears the long Qājār coat, but on his head is the high pointed lambskin *kulāh*, which is often worn by the attendants or *ghulāms* of the court yet may also be worn by Qājār princes.<sup>9</sup> Despite the damaged surface of the relief, a pearly border can be seen around the neck and down the front of his robe, a detail already observed on the standing bearded figure and not unusual for princely dress. Most unusual, however, is what appears to be a short cravat around his neck, a feature without parallel in any other representation of early Qājār male clothing. These attributes are not sufficient to identify the figure with certainty, but, for reasons that will be explained later, it is likely that he represents Muḥammad Mīrzā, son of 'Abbās Mīrzā and designated Second Crown Prince (ruled as Muḥammad Shāh, 1250/1834–1264/1848). The scene is framed by a pair of spirally fluted columns resting on vase-shaped pedestals.

Below this scene is a frieze of small figures who seem



FIG. 6. Relief of Faḥ 'Alī Shāh. Detail of frieze, base of the relief.



to fan out from a central point towards the edges (fig. 6). Their near arms bend at the elbow to rest on short swords that hang from their waists. In their action and mirror-like symmetry, these figures recall the procession of nobles carved in relief on the staircases and landings of the Achaemenid palaces at Persepolis (fig. 7).<sup>10</sup>

Placed below the main scene, the figures in the frieze correspond to the *ghulāms* below the enthroned king in the famous painting of FathĪ ‘Alī Shāh with his

court and the foreign ambassadors that once hung in the Nigāristān Palace in Tehran.<sup>11</sup> Instead of the flowing robes of the *ghulāms*, however, the figures in the frieze appear to wear short coats and narrow leggings, similar to the Europeanized clothing worn by the Persian court and bureaucracy in the latter half of the nineteenth century;<sup>12</sup> such dress is worn by the court officials, carrying swords or walking sticks, carved on the sides of the sarcophagus of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh (d. 1313/1896) in his mausoleum at Rayy (fig. 8).



FIG. 7. Procession of nobles on a stairway landing. Central Building, Persepolis.

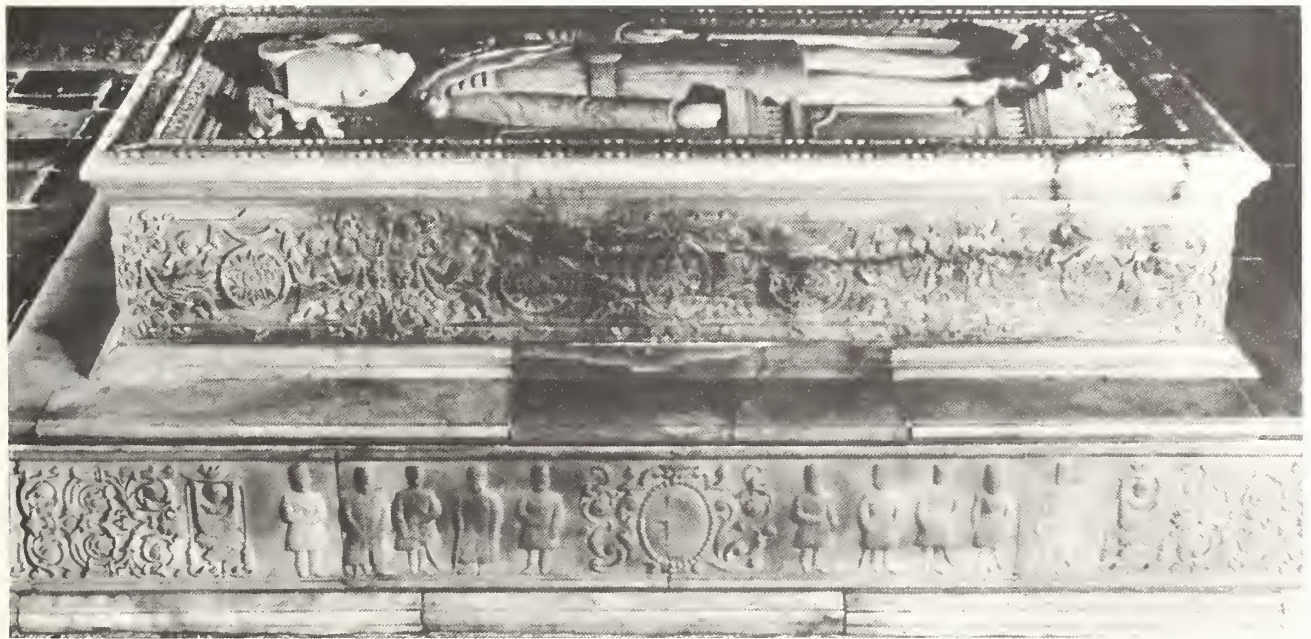


FIG. 8. Sarcophagus of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, Rayy. A. U. Pope Photographic Archives, The Asia Institute, Shiraz.



These garments, then, suggest that the frieze was added to the relief later in the Qājār period, a time when Achaemenid motifs had become an important source of inspiration for relief carving.<sup>13</sup>

Not so for the image of the enthroned Fath 'Alī Shāh. His tall frontal figure, raised high on his platform throne and flanked by his heirs, follows the tradition of Sasanian reliefs. The most striking parallel is that of Bahrām II at Sarāb Bahrām, not far to the northwest of Shiraz, near Fahlayān (fig. 9). There, Bahrām II sits in full majesty, with courtiers on either side making obeisance. The Sasanian king and his court are locked into an airless space, bordered by the rough surface of the cliff. With no reference to precise time or place, the relief serves as an eternal expression of kingship. This is also the intention of Fath 'Alī Shāh's relief, but with an important difference: a specific place is represented.

It is the audience hall, known as the *Tālār-i Takht-i Marmar*, in the Gulistān Palace in Tehran (fig. 10). The *Tālār* rests on a high foundation faced with

carved marble slabs. A pair of columns, each carved from a single piece of white marble, supports its roof. These slabs and columns originally belonged not to the Gulistān but to the *Dīvānkhāna*, the palace built by the Zand ruler, Karīm Khān, in Shiraz. In 1207/1792, after Āqā Muḥammad, founder of the Qājār Dynasty, had conquered the Zand capital of Shiraz, he removed to his own capital at Tehran some of the more remarkable decorations that had adorned the Zand palace. These were, as described in the *Fārsnāma-yi Nāshirī*, "two columns, each consisting of one piece, and pieces of marble from the window gratings (*ezāra*) and gate wings with wood carving of fine quality."<sup>14</sup> Today, Karīm Khān's Shiraz palace—hemmed in by the telephone office on one side, its once impressive approach blocked by the post office, and its facade shorn of all grandeur—retains little of its former glory.<sup>15</sup> Wooden columns, disfigured by peeling paint, now support the roof, a twentieth-century renovation, and none of the marble *ezāra* work of the Zand period remains.<sup>16</sup>



FIG. 9. Relief of Bahrām II, Sarāb Bahrām. Courtesy of Carol Bier and Lionel Bier.



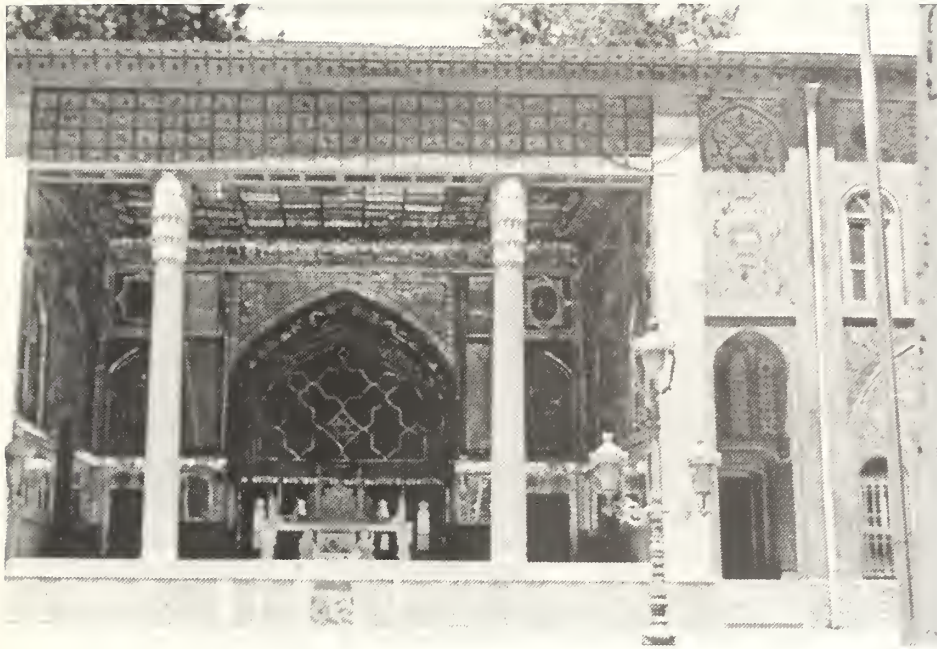


FIG. 10. *Tālār-i Takht-i Marmar*, Gulistān Palace, Tehran. After a postcard.



FIG. 11. *Takht-i Marmar*, Gulistān Palace, Tehran. After a postcard.

Returning to the Shiraz relief, it is apparent that the columns framing the enthroned Fath 'Alī Shāh represent the very ones that had been brought from Shiraz. The bases of the originals, seen today in Tehran, are decorated with a frieze of flowering vessels, while those in the Shiraz relief show a single vase supporting a row of smaller vases from which the column fluting sprouts. Furthermore, the triple tiers of cabled fluting that form the capitals of the actual columns have become a double row of concave flutings. But the spirally fluted shafts of the columns of

the *Tālār-i Takht-i Marmar* are accurately rendered in the relief to indicate the intended setting.

This *tālār* of the Gulistān, built originally by Karīm Khān Zand<sup>17</sup> and then in Qājār times enlarged and embellished with the marble from Karīm Khān's Shiraz palace, houses the marble throne carved in 1221/1806, early in Fath 'Alī Shāh's reign (fig. 11).<sup>18</sup> It is one of three famous thrones used by that monarch, the other two being the *Takht-i Tāvus* and the jeweled chair known as the *Takht-i Nādar*.<sup>19</sup> The broad platform of the *Takht-i Marmar*, as it exists



today, is bounded on both sides by a carved balustrade surmounted by female figures. At the rear is a backrest, which consists of a central panel between two spirally fluted columns. The throne is reached by two steps, flanked by reclining lions. The steps are guarded further by armed *dāvs* in combat with fire-breathing dragons. Internally, this elaborate structure is underpinned by a series of short columns, again spirally fluted, but the outer and more visible supports are rows of human figures, carved in the round. The sides and rear corners rest on the shoulders of women, while the front corners are borne by young men.<sup>20</sup>

Very different figures bear the throne in the Shiraz relief (fig. 12). On the left, supporting the throne's right front corner, a winged figure, shown in full face, bends its left knee with right hand crossing its chest. Its left counterpart appears in profile, wings flaring to either side of its head. Both figures carry the throne, not on their shoulders but on their heads. Other details differentiate the throne in the relief from the *Takht-i Marmar*: there is no balustrade, and the backrest lacks the spirally fluted shafts at the sides. To

judge by the height of the remaining, visible step, the original number of steps leading to the throne may have been three rather than two. From what can be seen of the uppermost, the riser seems to have been decorated with something other than the dragons of the actual *Takht-i Marmar*.

These differences might suggest that another throne is depicted; yet no sources attest to the existence of more than one marble throne, nor to one also supported by figures, and certainly not to one that pre-dates the reign of Fath 'Alī Shāh.<sup>21</sup> More likely, the throne, as depicted in the relief, was intended not as an accurate rendition of the *Takht-i Marmar* but as an abbreviation that conflates the *dāvs* and other beings into a single pair of winged supporters. This not only makes the throne easier to represent but, through the substitution of the winged figures, invests it with additional significance and power.

Winged figures as throne supports are an ancient Iranian motif. In rock reliefs and on metalwork, the thrones of Parthian and Sasanian kings are borne by winged animals.<sup>22</sup> The supports for the famous *Takht-i Taqdīs* of Khusrau II Parvīz are



FIG. 12. Relief of Fath 'Alī Shāh. Detail of base of throne.



not specifically described in the accounts of that remarkable mechanized throne,<sup>23</sup> but an illustrated Qājār *Shāhnāma* depicts Khusrau Parvīz seated on a *takht*, identified as the *Takht-i Taqdīs*, supported by kneeling winged figures.<sup>24</sup> They appear as western-style *putti*, plump naked children, who hold the corners of the throne in their upraised hands. Two more *putti* perch on the throne back, flanking a rising sun, while dangling festoons of pearls above Khusrau's head. This *Shāhnāma* illustration is dated 1279/1862–63, that is to say, considerably later than the Shiraz relief.

The convention, then, of the ruler's throne borne by winged human figures was undoubtedly current during the time of Fath ʿAlī Shāh. In Persian literary and artistic tradition, the throne of the legendary Jamshīd was carried by *jinns* and *dīvs*, as was the throne of Solomon, who was equated with Jamshīd.<sup>25</sup> By showing winged figures as throne supports, the sculptor of the Shiraz relief was acknowledging the occupant as "the Solomon of the Age." And, in fact, this is the honorific bestowed upon Fath ʿAlī Shāh in the dedicatory inscription on the actual *Takht-i Marmar*.<sup>26</sup>

To my knowledge, the Shiraz relief is the only representation of Fath ʿAlī Shāh on the *Takht-i Marmar*, or for that matter on any throne borne by winged figures.<sup>27</sup> In all other paintings of him seated, he is enthroned on another platform, the *Takht-i Tāvus*,<sup>28</sup> on the *Takht-i Nādarī* or some other chair,<sup>29</sup> or else on a carpeted floor with a large bolster behind his back.<sup>30</sup> The choice of this particular platform throne, housed in its distinctively columned *tālār*, cannot be other than deliberate.

The *Tālār-i Takht-i Marmar* as the setting of the relief is a reflection of the political situation in Fars and of the continual struggle for the succession that marked the reign of Fath ʿAlī Shāh. Throughout his reign, Qājār rule was especially precarious in that province. The major challenge to the Crown and to the succession of ʿAbbās Mīrzā, designated Crown Prince by Fath ʿAlī Shāh in 1213/1799, came from Fars in the person of his half brother Ḥusain ʿAlī Mīrzā Farmān-Farmā, governor of Fars, and from Ḥusain ʿAlī Mīrzā's full brother Ḥasan ʿAlī Mīrzā Shujaʿ al-Saltāna. ʿAbbās Mīrzā had been named Crown Prince according to the wishes of Āqā Muḥammad Qājār, his great-uncle and founder of the dynasty, even though he was Fath ʿAlī Shāh's fourth-born son.<sup>31</sup> Since Fath ʿAlī Shāh's three older sons had been disqualified, Ḥusain ʿAlī Mīrzā, as Fath ʿAlī Shāh's fifth son, apparently believed that the succession was fair game for him. And, in fact, the period from 1812 to the mid-1820s has been

identified by C. E. Davies as especially marked by Ḥusain ʿAlī Mīrzā's royalist schemes.<sup>32</sup>

Seen in this political context, the Shiraz relief is a vivid warning to all pretenders that the line of succession from Fath ʿAlī Shāh through ʿAbbās Mīrzā to Muḥammad Mīrzā is immutable and secure. Its specific references to the *Tālār-i Takht-i Marmar* make the relief a harsh yet apt subject for Shiraz. Set above the Isfahan Road, instantly visible and recognizable to all leaving and entering the city, the relief, with its prominent twisted columns, would have served as a constant reminder to Shirazis of their ignominious defeat at the hands of Āqā Muḥammad Qājār, their loss of rule being symbolized by the transference of Karīm Khān's marble columns to the palace in Tehran.

Such an interpretation suggests that the relief was carved by order of Fath ʿAlī Shāh. If so, it would not be the first expression of Qājār dominance over Fars through monumental artistic means. While still Crown Prince, Fath ʿAlī Shāh had restored the *Takht-i Qājār*, a palace on the outskirts of Shiraz, as a symbol of centralized Qājār authority.<sup>33</sup>

Beyond the general desire to give visual expression to Qājār rule, this carving of Fath ʿAlī Shāh into the rock above Shiraz may have been triggered by a specific event. In 1238/1822, in response to a rumor that Ḥasan ʿAlī Mīrzā, then governor of Khorasan, was planning a revolt against the central government, he and Ḥusain ʿAlī Mīrzā traveled from Meshhad and Shiraz, respectively, to Tehran to reassure Fath ʿAlī Shāh of their loyalty. Upon his arrival in 1238/1823, Ḥasan ʿAlī Mīrzā renounced his governorship.<sup>34</sup> But Ḥusain ʿAlī Mīrzā returned to Shiraz and to his rule of Fars.

Fath ʿAlī Shāh may have ordered the relief to counter Ḥusain ʿAlī Mīrzā's royal pretensions. His frontal, hieratic image dominating the city of Shiraz would have provoked awe and respect. Indeed, so potent was his image that, according to Sir John Malcolm, envoy to Persia from the East India Company, the painted likeness of Fath ʿAlī Shāh was held in almost as much reverence as the monarch's actual presence.<sup>35</sup>

Lt. Alexander's 1825 visit to the relief and his mention of it as recently executed would fit well with these events. Alexander describes the relief as showing Fath ʿAlī Shāh with the "Heir Apparent" (that is, ʿAbbās Mīrzā). He also links its execution with that of the nearby horseman relief and notes that both had been "executed by order of the Prince [of Fars]." <sup>36</sup> Subsequent authors, foreign as well as Persian, identify the figures flanking the Shāh as two of his sons,<sup>37</sup> but other authors, all of them Persian, attribute only



the horseman relief to Ḥusain 'Alī Mīrzā and date it to 1218/1803.<sup>38</sup>

It seems unlikely that Ḥusain 'Alī Mīrzā would commission a relief so clearly affirming a situation he so much wanted to change. And it is even more unlikely that he would show himself as Heir Apparent in so public a setting. If my interpretation is correct, the figures flanking Fath 'Alī Shāh can only be 'Abbās Mīrzā and his son, Muḥammad Mīrzā, who, if the relief were carved between 1823 and 1825, would have been fifteen to seventeen years old.<sup>39</sup> It is possible, however, that Ḥusain 'Alī Mīrzā ordered the relief to commemorate his visit of 1823 to Tehran, thus showing himself as prince, though not as Crown Prince. More broadly, he may have had the relief carved as a gesture of loyalty to Tehran and evidence of his acceptance of the succession. If either of these possibilities were the case, then the relief would be simply a way to appease his father, the Shāh. That it did not signal a change of heart is demonstrated by Ḥusain 'Alī Mīrzā's subsequent attempts to undermine central Qājār rule, culminating in his revolt

against the newly crowned Muḥammad Shāh in 1250/1835.

The choice of such precise imagery for the Shiraz relief—different as it is from previous and subsequent Qājār enthronement scenes, painted or carved—reveals an originality and expressive power not typically associated with Qājār art. In addition to its unique depiction of Fath 'Alī Shāh on the *Takht-i Marmar*, the relief is a striking example of how the imagery and an artistic technique of previous dynasties were adapted to serve current political needs. By harking back to ancient imperial representational traditions, the relief allies Fath 'Alī Shāh with Persia's glorious past, while placing him at the culmination of that long imperial tradition. By showing him with his heirs apparent, the relief asserts the inevitability of the succession; its evocation of the *Takht-i Marmar* and the columnar symbols of Shiraz's former glory affirm Tehran as the legitimate seat of Qājār power. Iconic in its expression, the relief confronts a political situation, while serving as an immediate yet eternal emblem of absolute kingship.

## Notes

Layla S. Diba, Oscar White Muscarella, and Leo Steinberg read earlier drafts of this paper and made many useful comments, which I have gratefully incorporated. The opinions and conclusions expressed here, however, are my own, for which I take full responsibility. All photographs are the author's unless credited otherwise.

1. There are hints, however, of some continuity of the tradition. One is the carving of a dragon and vegetal decoration in a rock complex that may have served as a Buddhist monastery of the Il-Khānīd period (G. Scarcia, "The 'Vihār' of Qonqor-olong. Preliminary Report," *East and West*, n.s., 25 [1975]: 99ff.). But there are no known reliefs in the tradition of the great figural compositions of the pre-Islamic period.
2. These themes have been noted by H. von Gall in his comprehensive discussion of the Qājār rock reliefs in his paper presented at the VIIth International Congress for Iranian Art and Archaeology, Munich, 7–12 September 1976 and summarized in "Die qadjarischen Felsreliefs als archäologisches Problem," *Akten des VII. Internationalen Kongresses für Iranische Kunst und Archäologie* (AMI, Ergänzungsband 6, [Berlin, 1979]), 617–18. I am grateful to Dr. von Gall for discussing with me the problems raised by these reliefs while we were both working in Iran. He is currently preparing for publication the enthronement and audience scenes for the *Iranische Denkmäler* (personal communication, 1/91). Similarities in subject matter between Achaemenid and Sasanian reliefs and Qājār court painting were recognized earlier by B. W. Robinson ("The Court Painters of FathĪ ‘Alī Shāh," *Eretz-Israel* 7 [L. A. Mayer Memorial Volume, Jerusalem, 1963], 97).
3. All eight have been documented by von Gall (n. 2 above) and P. Luft, "Die qadjarischen Felsreliefs: Tradition und Ideologie im Iran des 19. Jahrhunderts," unpublished paper presented at the VIIth International Congress for Iranian Art and Archaeology. The eighth relief is of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh (1264/1848–1313/1896). The dates of the reliefs cited in this article are those read by Luft and given in his and von Gall's papers.  
Monumental rock carving in the Qājār period was not just the prerogative of the court. Two rock reliefs in Fars province seem to date to this time, although one, in very eroded condition, could well be much earlier, possibly even Parthian. Both are located at Pul-i Ābgina, near the relief of Tīmūr Mīrzā (dated by its inscription to 1245/1829), the governor of Kazerun and lion-taming son of Ḥusain ‘Alī Mīrzā, governor of Fars (E. de Waele, "Trois reliefs rupestres de Pol-e Abguineh," *Iranica Antiqua* 21 [1986]: 167–88).
4. I plan to discuss this relief, its unusual iconography, and its associations with Safavid imagery elsewhere.
5. J. E. Alexander, *Travels from India to England . . . in the Years 1825, 1826* (London, 1827), 132. He also describes the rider relief and includes a drawing of it (298, fig. 13).
6. Ḥasan-i Fasā’ī Shīrāzī, *Fārsnāma-yi Nāṣirī* 2 (Tehran, 1313/1895); Forsat al-Daula Shīrāzī, *Āthār-i ‘Ajām* (Bombay, 1314/1896). The rider relief is mentioned, along with that of FathĪ ‘Alī Shāh, and illustrated by A. N. Bihārūzī, *Julgā-yi Shīrāz* (Shiraz, 1354/1975), 102–4, and is also noted by G. Fehévari ("Two Early Mihrabs Outside Shiraz," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 1 [1969]: 3). Although many foreign travelers enthusiastically describe the view of Shiraz from the *Tang-i Allāhū Akbar*, few seem to have noticed the reliefs, which were visible from the road until the middle of this century, when stone retaining walls were built at the edge of each terrace. Two visitors who do are R. B. M. Binning, who noticed the relief in 1851 (*A Journal of Two Years' Travel in Persia, Etc.* [London, 1857], 1:298) and G. N. Curzon, in 1889 (*Persia and the Persian Question* [London: Longmans, 1892], 2:94). Immediately to the left of FathĪ ‘Alī Shāh's relief is a great expanse of smooth rock, perhaps done in preparation for another, more ambitious, relief.
7. For example, the relief of Shāpūr III with Shāpūr II at Tāq-i Bustān (L. Vanden Berghe, *L'Archéologie de l'Iran ancien* [Leiden: Brill, 1966], Pl. 127b).
8. Cf. the portrait of ‘Abbās Mīrzā in the frontispiece of P. A. Jaubert, *Voyage en Arménie et en Perse, fait dans les années 1805 et 1806* (Paris, 1821), and the description of the robe and other paraphernalia that ‘Abbās Mīrzā received on his appointment as Crown Prince in 1213/1799 in H. Busse, *History of Persia Under Qājār Rule, Translated from the Persian of Ḥasan-e Fasā’i's Fārsnāma-ye Nāseri* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1972), 89. (Hereafter cited as *Fārsnāma*).
9. For a discussion of the princely portrait type, see F. M. Ansari, *Die Malerei der Zeit der Qadjar-Dynastie (1796–1925) im Iran* (Paris and Stuttgart, 1980), 98. I wish to thank Prof. E. Yarshater for making this work available to me.
10. On the availability of the monuments of Persepolis throughout antiquity and later, see Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Through Travellers' Eyes: The Persian Monuments as Seen by European Visitors," in *Achaemenid History VII: Through Traveller's Eyes*, ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and J. W. Drijvers (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 1–35.
11. The painting, now destroyed, was executed in 1128/1812–13. Copies in reduced scale were acquired by various English emissaries to Persia in the nineteenth century; variations of the painting decorated the Qājār palaces of Sulāimāniyā (Karaj), Bāgh-i Fīn (Kashan), and the Bāgh-i Nō (Shiraz) (Robinson, "Court Painters," 98f.).
12. J. M. Scarce, "Vesture and Dress," in *Woven from the Soul, Spun from the Heart: Textile Arts of Safavid and Qajar Iran, 16th–19th Centuries*, ed. C. Bier (Washington, D.C.: Textile Museum, 1987), 50–51.
13. Achaemenid reliefs seem to have supplanted Sasanian reliefs as the primary models for relief sculpture, particularly—and most appropriately—in Shiraz, where Persepolitan motifs were used for architectural decoration. See J. Lerner, "Three Achaemenid 'Fakes'," *Expedition* 22 (1980): 5–16.
14. *Fārsnāma*, 55. Y. Zukā includes paintings on canvas (*pardihā-yi naqqāsh*), full-length mirrors, and inlaid and gilded doors in the Shiraz booty (*Tārīkhcha-yi Sakhtamānā-yi Ārg-i*



*Salṭanatī-yi Tihṛān va Rāhnamā-yi kākh-i gulistān* [Tehran, 1349/1970], 45, 90.

15. A contemporary photograph of the *Divānkhāna* is in D. N. Wilber, *Persian Gardens and Garden Pavilions* (Rutland, Vt. and Tokyo: C. E. Tuttle Co., 1962), pl. 106, where it is incorrectly identified as a "typical smaller town house and garden." For a description of the *Divānkhāna* in Zand times, see the account of W. Francklin, who visited Shiraz in 1786, seven years after the death of Karīm Khān (*Observations Made on a Tour from Bengal to Persia in the Years 1786–7* [Calcutta, 1788], 23). Although he mentions the interior of the *tālār*—its white Tabriz marble dado, gold enameling on the walls and ceiling, and portraits of Karīm Khān and his son, Abū'l-Faṭḥ Khān—he writes nothing about the marble columns. Of the many descriptions of the *Divānkhāna* in early Qājār times, under the governorship of Ḥusain 'Alī Mīrzā, the most graphic one is that of J. J. Morier, who accompanied Sir Harford Jones Brydges' mission in 1808 (*A Journey through Persia . . . in the Years 1808 and 1809* [London: Longman, 1812], 108). The replacement columns, probably of wood, were "elegantly gilded and painted." For other descriptions of the building, see J. Lerner, "British Travelers' Accounts as a Source for Qajar Shiraz," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 1–4 (1976): 236–39.
16. Instead, a Qājār relief depicting Rustam slaying Ashkebus covers the base of the *tālār* (see Wilber, *Persian Gardens*, pl. 106 and the detail of Rustam in A. Godard, *The Art of Iran* [New York and Washington: Praeger, 1965], pl. 164). The series of slabs, carved with the figures of the legendary Paladins of Iran, now built into the wall of a modern government building, were erroneously attributed to the Zand palace by A. D. Tushingham, "The Takht-i Marmar (Marble Throne) in Tehran," in *Iranian Civilization and Culture*, ed. C. J. Adams (Montreal: McGill University Institute of Islamic Studies, 1972), 125, 127 n. 8. Rather, they belonged to another *divānkhāna* of Qājār date, built across the *maidān* from Karīm Khān's palace and destroyed in 1934 when Karīm Khān-i Zand Avenue was put through the *maidān* and *bāzār* area.  
A photograph of the building with the carved slabs *in situ* appears in Wilber, *Persian Gardens*, pl. 101. A comparison of these crudely carved warriors with the floral decoration of the *ezāra* of the *Tālār-i Takht-i Marmar* (Tushingham, pl. 17) will show that they could not be contemporary and that the warriors are considerably later.
17. Zukā, *Tārīkhcha-yi*, 42. The spirally fluted shaft is a hallmark of Zand architecture: the southern prayer hall of the Masjid-i Vakīl, built by Karīm Khān (completed in 1187/1773) is supported by 48 stone columns with spirally fluted shafts, though with acanthus leaf capitals (Godard, *Art of Iran*, pl. 167).
18. The 1221/1806 date is derived from an *abjad* formula on the balustrade of the throne. There is also a second *abjad* date of 1226/1811 (Zukā, *Tārīkhcha-yi*, 51, 95–96).
19. See J. M. Upton and P. Ackerman, "Furniture," *SPA* 3:2657; and Curzon, *Persia*, 1:317–22.
20. A more detailed account is not necessary for the arguments presented here; thorough descriptions of the throne are given by Tushingham, "Takht-i Marmar," 122–24, and Zukā, *Tārīkhcha-yi*, 91–99 and figs. 39–45.
21. While some authors have attributed the throne to Karīm Khān Zand (notably Curzon, *Persia*, 1:313, as well as Tushingham, "Takht-i Marmar," 124), neither William Francklin nor Sir Harford Jones Brydges, who were in Shiraz in 1786 and 1787, respectively, mentions the existence of a marble throne, even though Jones describes in great detail Karīm Khān's building activities and adds that when he saw the buildings, they were "nearly in the same state as they were at the death of the founder." Jones further notes "the grand pillars and beautiful marbles" that were carried away by the "ferocious eunuch," Āqā Muḥammad, the latter referring to the *ezāra* panels that now adorn the foundation of the *Tālār-i Takht-i Marmar* (Francklin, *Observations*; Harford Jones Brydges, "Preliminary Matter," in *The Dynasty of the Kajars, Translated from the Original Persian Manuscript . . .* [London: J. Bohn, 1833], cv–viii). Nor does the *Fārsnāma* mention a marble throne among the spoils from Karīm Khān's palace. Certainly, so spectacular a trophy would have been noted (see n. 14 above).
22. For example, the winged horses on the Sasanian crystal medallion of the so-called "Cup of Solomon" and the silver bowl from Strelka, both showing Khusrau I enthroned (R. Ghirshman, *Persian Art: The Parthian and Sassanian Dynasties, 249 B.C.–A.D. 651* [New York: Golden Press, 1962], 205, fig. 244 and 206, fig. 245); also, the post-Sasanian throne leg in the form of a griffin's foreparts (Ghirshman, 214, fig. 255).
23. See Firdausī's otherwise detailed description in M. Mohl, ed., *Le Livre du roi* (reprint, Paris, 1976), 7:313–15. Cf. A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (Copenhagen: E. Munksgaard, 1944), 466–68.
24. Nigāristān Museum, 77.8.1, *Shāhnāma* with illustrations dated from 1270/1854 to 1280/1863.
25. C. E. Sachau, trans. and ed., *The Chronology of Ancient Nations. An English Version of the Arabic Text of the Athār-ul-Bakīyā of al-Bīrunī* (London, 1879; reprint, Frankfurt, 1969), 200; P. P. Soucek, "The Influence of Persepolis on Islamic Art," *Études arabes et islamiques I: Histoire et civilisation* (Paris, 1978), 198.
26. See n. 18 above.
27. It is also the only large-scale representation of Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh in the *Tālār-i Takht-i Marmar*. A miniature portrait shows him seated on the floor in the *Tālār-i Takht-i Marmar*, identified by the single column with its spirally fluted shaft and frieze of vessels on its base that appears at one edge of the painting. This is an early portrait, executed by Mīrzā Bābā in 1217/1802–3 and so depicts the *Tālār* prior to the construction of the *Takht-i Marmar* in 1806 (B. W. Robinson, *Persian Painting* [London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1965], no. 36, and Robinson, "Court Painters," 104.  
Seemingly twisted columns occur in two other enthronement scenes: in the Nigāristān painting of Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh with his court and foreign ambassadors and in a miniature in the British Museum, Or. 5302 (see n. 11 above and N. Titley, *Miniatures from Persian Manuscripts* [London: British Museum, 1977], no. 348, respectively). However, the columns, which in these paintings flank the *Takht-i Tāvus*, cannot be those of the *Tālār-i Takht-i Marmar*, as they lack the base decorated with flowering vases and instead rest on

- a high balustrade; further, they are decorated by two solid-colored and floral spiral bands in contrast to the sculptured spirally twisted shafts of the actual columns of the *Tālār*.
28. Thus the Nigāristān painting and its several copies (Robinson, "Court Painters," pl. XXXIII) and Fath 'Alī Shāh's rock relief at Chashma 'Alī, at Rayy (F. Sarre and E. Herzfeld, *Iranisches Felsreliefs* [Berlin: E. Wasmuth, 1910], pl. 50).
  29. For example, B. W. Robinson, *Persian Paintings in the India Office Library* (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1976), no. 1245. Cf. S. R. Peterson, "Chairs and Change in Qajar Times," in *Modern Iran: The Dialectics of Continuity and Change*, ed. M. Bonine and N. R. Keddie (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 383ff.
  30. Robinson, "Court Painters," pls. XXXV, XXXVI:2 and 3, XXXVII:1.
  31. H. Busse, "Abbās Mīrzā," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 1, fasc. 1 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), 79–84; *Fārsnāma*, 88–89. According to the *Tārikh-i Montazam-i Nāsiḥ* of E'tamad al-Salṭani, Fath 'Alī Shāh made 'Abbās Mīrzā Crown Prince immediately after he ascended the throne. Because his mother was a full-blooded Qājār princess, 'Abbās Mīrzā's designation as Crown Prince fulfilled Āqā Muḥammad's wish to "cement the bond between the Qoyunlu and Develu," the two main branches of the Qājār tribe (Busse, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 80).
  32. "Qajar Rule in Fars Prior to 1849," *Iran* 25 (1987): 125f.
  33. Davies, "Qajar Rule," 125f. This restoration may have followed an earlier restoration by Āqā Muḥammad Qājār of a Seljuk foundation (cf. *Fārsnāma*, 88 n. 31; Lerner, "British Travellers' Accounts," 218ff). By 1875, the palace had acquired its present name, *Bāgh-i Takht*.
  34. *Fārsnāma*, 166–67.
  35. Malcolm observed that a painting of Fath 'Alī Shāh, though packed in a box for its journey to the Prince of Sind, "could not be allowed to pass through [Fath 'Alī Shāh's] dominions without receiving marks of respect hardly short of those that would have been shown to the sovereign himself" (*Sketches of Persia* [London, 1828], 44). I wish to thank Layla S. Diba for recalling this passage to me.
  36. Alexander, *Travels*, 132. Although Alexander links the execution of the enthronement relief with that of the horseman, the reliefs may not be exactly contemporary: the horseman is carved in a bolder and coarser style.
  37. Binning, *Journal*, and Curzon, *Persia*; B. Karīmī, *Rāhnamā-yi Āṣar-i Tārikh-i Shīrāz* (Tehran, 1344/1965), 14; S. M. T. Moṣṭafavi, *The Land of Pars*, trans. R. N. Sharp (Chippenhams, Wilts.: Picton Publishing, 1978), 33.
  38. H. Imdād, *Shīrāz dar Godhashta va Hāl* (Shīrāz, 1339/1960), 191; Karīmī, *Rāhnamā*, 14. If my dating is accurate, then the Shiraz horseman would be the earliest (though not internally dated) Qājār rock relief.
  39. Muḥammad Mīrzā was born in 1222/1808 (*Fārsnāma*, 122); in 1234/1818 he was made heir apparent (*vālī'ahd-i thānī*) according to Lisān al-Mulk Sipīhr, *Nāsiḥ al-Tavārikh*, ed. J. Q. Maqami (Tehran, 1337/1958), 186. This reference was kindly given to me by Prof. A. K. S. Lambton.  
In the art of this period, the visual convention that marks the passage from youth to manhood is the wearing of a beard. Thus, 'Abbās Mīrzā, who was born in 1204/1789, is shown crowned and still beardless at the age of twenty-one in an 1810 miniature but sports a full beard by the time he is twenty-seven in a painting of 1816 (I. Luschey-Schmeisser, "Sirene auf dem Lebensbaum. Nachleben alter Motive auf einem frühqadjarischen Qalamkar," *AMI*, n.s., 21 [1988], pl. 75:3 and 4, respectively; also Ansari, *Malerei*, 98). In a European depiction of him, executed in 1805 or 1806 when he was seventeen or eighteen, he shows the beginnings of a beard, an adolescent stage that conventions of Qājār miniature painting do not allow (Jaubert, *Voyage*, frontispiece).





# ANICONISM AND THE MULTIVALENCE OF EMBLEMS\*

By VIDYA DEHEJIA

ALTHOUGH IT IS AXIOMATIC AMONG LITERARY CRITICS THAT A work may contain multiple layers of meaning, many historians of art, particularly of early Buddhist art, seem curiously reluctant to accept a comparable conflation of meanings. Yet if Aśvaghoṣa, writing his *Buddhacharita* around A.D. 100, could make habitual use of words in two or more meanings,<sup>1</sup> and if Āryaśūra could constantly use *śleṣa* or double entendre in his fourth-century *Jātakamālā*,<sup>2</sup> parallel skills were undoubtedly known to the artist producing visual narratives in the media of stone and paint. This essay advocates the need to recognize, accept, and even admire the multiplicity of meanings apparent in early Buddhist sculpture and painting, in which the artist reminded the viewer of the manifold religious interpretations that may be suggested by any single emblem. Scholars have insisted too much upon singular and exclusive explanations of early Buddhist reliefs, from the totally aniconic interpretation of the early 1900s<sup>3</sup> to the somewhat restrictive site-oriented interpretation of this last decade.<sup>4</sup>

There are two critical and complementary prerequisites for the accurate interpretation of early Buddhist art. The first is an awareness of the multiple meanings conveyed by the major Buddhist emblems of the tree, the pillar, and the *stūpa*. The emblem is a picture that represents something different from itself. The tree, pillar, and *stūpa* may in fact be interpreted in three distinct and equally valid ways in different contexts and in varying visual compositions. In their first aspect, emblems may be read as aniconic presentations of the Buddha. The term “aniconic” carries the dictionary meaning of “symbolizing without aiming at resemblance,” and “aniconism” is defined as “worship or veneration of an object that represents a god without being an image of him.”<sup>5</sup> This essay will show that a variety of emblems, including footprints, a seat or throne, a parasol, and a pillar of radiance, were frequently used, singly or in combination, to represent the person of the Buddha in a narrative art that was primarily concerned with the biography of the Buddha. To deny the validity of this concern of the ancient artists, devotees, monks, and nuns<sup>6</sup> is to misread the overall message of the monuments. In their second aspect, the emblems of the tree, pillar, and *stūpa*, seen in relief sculptures, may

represent sacred spots, or *āṛthas*, and the devotions performed there. Thus, the *bodhi* tree may be intended to represent Bodh Gayā, site of the enlightenment; the wheel-crowned pillar may represent Sārnāth, site of the first sermon; and the *stūpa* may represent one of the sacred relic mounds built at a variety of sites. In their third aspect, these same emblems of tree, pillar, and *stūpa* are to be viewed as attributes of the faith; thus the tree is intended to recall the divine wisdom of the Buddha, while the pillar suggests his sacred doctrine.

The exact interpretation of the emblems depends on their visual context. In one panel, the tree sheltering a seat may be an emblem that portrays the presence of the Buddha himself; the sacred *pīpal* tree may indicate the enlightenment of the Buddha, while a mango tree may indicate his presence at Śrāvastī. In another panel, the tree with a seat beneath it may stand for a hallowed pilgrimage site; the sacred *pīpal* tree may indicate Bodh Gayā, site of the enlightenment. In yet other panels, the *pīpal* tree is intended to recall the essence of the enlightenment—the supreme wisdom of the Buddha. Clearly, not every depiction of symbols should be read as an aniconic portrayal of the Buddha, but it is equally invalid to deny the existence of an aniconic phase and to maintain that scenes with symbols should be interpreted either as sacred *āṛthas* or as pageantry reenactments of events from the life of the Buddha.

The second crucial prerequisite for interpreting the emblems is to acknowledge their multilayered significance. The nonfigural emblem, in narrative presentations, makes simultaneous reference both to the presence of the Buddha and to the truths that his life manifested. Equally, a relief may be read both as an event in the life of the Buddha and as the holy site at which that event occurred. It must be emphasized that the artists working at the early Buddhist sites frequently seem to have intended a conflation of meanings. When the primary intention was to depict an event from the Buddha’s biography, the artist often included a reference to the site as a *āṛtha*. For instance, the Bhārhut scenes of the Buddha’s enlightenment on the Prasenajit pillar, considered below, include a shrine around the *bodhi* tree that was not built until two centuries after the historical moment of the enlightenment. While the prime intention of this panel was to depict the historical event, the artist’s portrayal of the shrine also suggests the holy site. In fact, as explained below, parallel instances of

\*Editor’s note: The *Ars Orientalis* Editorial Board has invited Susan Huntington of Ohio State University to respond to this article. Her rejoinder will appear in volume 22.





FIG. 1. *Visit of King Prasenajit of Kosala to Shrine Built to Honor the Buddha, Bhārhut.*  
Courtesy American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS).

such depictions exist in non-Buddhist contexts too. It is probable that neither the artist nor the early Indian worshipper at Bhārhut found anything incongruous in such confections. Panels with the reverse emphasis also occur: When a wheel is portrayed to suggest primarily the site of the first sermon, it is also surely intended to remind the viewer of the Buddha who preached that sermon at the site. In a similar manner, the attribute and the aniconic portrayal are conflated: a wheel, intended to indicate the wisdom of

the Buddha, also serves to remind the viewer of the Buddha whose wisdom it exemplifies. Through its capacity for multiple reference, the emblem suggests the simultaneity of events that occur at separate times.

Significantly, a double layer of meaning appears to inform the greater number of narrative reliefs at Bhārhut, Sānci, and other early Buddhist sites. One such instance of multilayered meaning may be seen on the Prasenajit pillar at Bhārhut, in a panel that uses



the synoptic mode<sup>7</sup> to depict the visit of King Prasena-jit to the shrine he built in honor of the Buddha (fig. 1). It is important to understand that the panel does not depict Sārnāth, the site of the first sermon.<sup>8</sup> To the lower right is a barrel-roofed gateway from which emerge horse and riders who represent the monarch and his entourage; they are repeated to the lower left as they ride on towards the shrine. On the roof of the gateway is the inscribed identifying label “King Pasenaji of Kosala,” which may not be ignored; it suggests the actual historical event in which the monarch visited the Buddha at Prasena-jit’s capital of Śrāvastī and listened to his sermon. A large barrel-vaulted shrine housing a garlanded wheel surmounted by a garlanded parasol occupies the larger part of the panel; the two flanking figures probably represent the circum-ambulating monarch rather than two separate worshippers. The circumambulation of the shrine building itself is suggested by the placement, on either side, of figures riding horses and elephants. The shrine roof carries the words “*Bhagavato dhammachakka*,” or “Wheel of doctrine of the Holy One,”<sup>9</sup> suggesting that the intention is to portray the wheel as an object of worship in the shrine erected by King Prasena-jit and to recall the sermon given there rather than to indicate the actual presence of the Buddha. However, the conflation of meanings is inevitable and surely intentional. The shrine was built by King Prasena-jit at the spot where the Buddha had preached to him; undoubtedly, the artist intended that the relief should also recall that event. As a nonfigural emblem, the wheel emphasizes the Law and also refers to the Buddha as the Giver of that Law. Most early Buddhist visual narratives contain this double layer of meaning. As soon as we accept the validity of such a system, with its accent on the fluidity of meanings, and cease to insist upon a single explanation to be applied in every instance, aniconism ceases to be such a vexed problem.

It may be advisable first to correct certain misconceptions that have arisen around the problem of aniconism so that we may clearly distinguish the

“baby” from the “bath water.” Certainly, the oversimplistic assumption of a Hīnayāna phase which produced aniconic art, followed by a Mahāyāna phase which introduced the anthropomorphic icon, must be abandoned. The basic split of early Buddhism into the Sarvāstivādin (Hīnayāna) and the Mahāsamghika (from which all Mahāyāna schools probably developed) occurred prior to the time of Aśoka, and the two systems coexisted from an early date. Evidence of such coexistence at around the turn of the Christian era is provided by the inscriptions of Rajūvala (ca. A.D. 1–15) and Śoḍasa (ca. A.D. 10–25). Their Kharoṣṭhī record on the Mathurā lion capital refers to the dedication of a Sarvāstivādin *stūpa* and monastery for the monks of the four directions and to the gift of a *vihāra* to the Sarvāstivādins as *dhammadāna*; it concludes with a mention of *ācārya* Budhi, “who had knowledge to teach the foremost Mahāsamghikas the truth.”<sup>10</sup>

In addition, it is today accepted that Hīnayāna schools were actively involved in the worship of the Buddha image; in fact, it has been demonstrated that some of the earliest images were Hīnayāna dedications.<sup>11</sup> One such is the ten-foot-tall Śrāvastī image of the Buddha, which, together with its monumental umbrella and shaft, was dedicated in the year 3 of Kanishka by the monk Bala, who was well versed in the Tripiṭakas. The image was set up in the hall known as Kosambakuṭi “for possession of the Sarvāstivādin Teachers.” Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna schools<sup>12</sup> coexisted for centuries, and both were interested in images; it would be quite incorrect to associate the one with aniconism and the other with the anthropomorphic icon. The differences between them lay in other and more complex realms.

The pageantry theory proposed as an alternative to aniconism is riddled with complications; in particular, there is little evidence, if any, that Buddhism had a tradition akin to that of the Christian passion plays, in which events from a sacred biography were staged.<sup>13</sup> The suggestion that the great departure of the Buddha (fig. 2), portrayed on the central architrave



FIG. 2. *The Great Departure*, Sānchi. Courtesy Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).



(inner face) of the east gateway at Sānchi, depicts not the actual event in the life of the Buddha but a later reenactment<sup>14</sup> poses major problems both for the interpretation of the visual material and for the perception of early Buddhist devotions at a sacred site. In visual terms, if aniconism did not exist, what could possibly have led the artist to avoid portraying upon the horse the human actor who played the part of the Buddha? Why would he have resorted to the extraordinary device of portraying a parasol hovering at an appropriate height above empty space over the horse? Equally problematic is the effect of the pageantry interpretation on the concept of the expression of Buddhist religious sentiment. It does a disservice to the notion of the religious devotion of the many hundreds of monks, nuns, and lay worshippers who contributed towards the decoration of the Sānchi *stūpa* (no less than 631 donative records) to suggest that they would build the immense stone structure and then decorate it merely with pictures of a pageant! Surely it was unnecessary to depict the enactment of an event when the artist could easily circumvent that middle step and depict the event itself.

The whole purpose of going to a *stūpa* was indeed to experience the presence of the Buddha through proximity with his enshrined relic. The inscription on the Bajaur relic casket, dated in the reign of the Indo-Greek King Menander (ca. 140–110 B.C.), speaks of the bodily relics of Śākyamuni as *prāṇa-samāda*, or “endowed with life.”<sup>15</sup> Recent study of the inscription at the main *stūpa* at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa suggests that both monks and lay worshippers considered the essence of the Buddha, perhaps even his living presence, to be actually contained within the relic.<sup>16</sup> However, the presence of the relic does not thereby preclude the need for stories from the life; in fact, reliving the historic life through viewing narrative sculptures recounting those events would enrich the experience of going to a *stūpa*. Equally, it is not valid to assume that the prevailing religion during this early period emphasized the perfection of virtues narrated in the *jātaka*s, thereby obviating the need for life scenes. The proposition that the early art of India was not primarily concerned with the biography of the Buddha<sup>17</sup> is difficult to sustain. On the contrary, scenes from the Buddha biography took pride of place in the decorative scheme of the first extensively decorated *stūpa* at Bhārhut. Life scenes were carved primarily on the prominent entrance pillars of the Bhārhut railing, where they would be readily seen by those who visited the site. Not a single biographical scene exists on the smaller spaces created by the meandering lotus stem along the Bhārhut coping, several feet above eye level, where only *jātaka* tales are placed. The half dozen or so portrayals of *ūrthas* at

Bhārhut are all to be found sculpted upon the cross-bars of the railing.<sup>18</sup>

The interpretation of the emblem, with its inherent fluidity of meanings, will be considered under its three valid categories—first as an aniconic presentation of the Buddha, next as a sacred site, and finally as an attribute. Relief panels from Bhārhut, Sānchi, Amarāvati, and the Gandhāran region will illustrate the discussion, although this brief analysis makes no attempt to present a chronological development. The necessary independent treatment of each site will be found in my book-length study of Buddhist visual narratives.

### *The Aniconic Presence*

A number of panels at Bhārhut, some with inscriptions of vital importance, provide incontrovertible evidence that the artist is depicting not the site of a great event but rather incidents from the sacred biography in which the Buddha is portrayed in aniconic form. One such is the story of the Serpent King Erapata, told through the mode of synoptic narrative in three distinct episodes on the central panel of the outer face of the Prasenaḥit pillar (fig. 3). To the rear of the panel, Erapata emerges from the waters of a river in purely reptilian form with his daughter upon his hood; beside them, also half submerged, is the young *brahmin* who provides the answer to Erapata's question. The second scene, in the right foreground, depicts Erapata in human form with a snake hood above his head, accompanied by his two queens as they emerge from the waters to go in search of the Buddha. The identifying label “*Erapato Nāgarāja*” is inscribed directly below the serpent king, along the vertical pillar of the band of railing that encloses the scene. Of crucial importance to the interpretation of aniconism is the final episode, which occupies the left third of the panel: Erapata, with hands joined in adoration, kneels in front of a seat beneath a garlanded tree. To ensure that the viewer is aware of the significance of the seat and garlanded tree as the emblematic presence of the Buddha, the words “*Erapato Nāgarāja Bhagavato Vadate*,” or “Serpent King Erapata adores the Holy One,” are inscribed intrusively into the visual field, just behind the kneeling figure. It seems difficult to read this inscribed piece of visual narrative as anything other than an instance of the aniconic depiction of the Buddha.

A second panel that provides undeniable evidence of aniconism is the visit of King Ajātashatru to the Buddha (fig. 4), narrated in a set of four scenes on the lowest panel of face one of the Ajātashatru pillar. To the lower left, the monarch and his queens ride upon



FIG. 3. *Story of Serpent King Erapata*, Bhārhut. Courtesy ASI.



FIG. 4. *King Ajātashatru Visits the Buddha*. Courtesy ASI.





FIG. 5. Enlightenment face of Prasenajit pillar, Bhārhut. Courtesy ASI.

elephants on their way to visit the Buddha, while to the right is a kneeling elephant from which Ajātashatru has dismounted in the mango grove (two trees suffice) of Jīva, where the Buddha is residing. The third scene, occupying the left rear of the panel, depicts the king and his queens standing with hands joined in adoration while a hanging lamp places the incident in the nighttime hours.<sup>19</sup> The final scene to the right rear is crucial to the issue under discussion; it depicts Ajātashatru kneeling before footprints, throne, and parasol. To ensure that the viewer correctly identifies the footprints, throne, and parasol as the Buddha, the artist added the label "*Ajātasatu Bhagavato vamdāte*," or "Ajātashatru bows to the Blessed One," which is inscribed sideways along the pilaster enclosing the panel to the right. It is difficult to misconstrue the artist's intention.

Three interrelated panels pertaining to the enlightenment (fig. 5) on the inner face of the Prasenajit pillar at Bhārhut provide a third instance of aniconism, in which inscriptional evidence (all of nine epigraphs) confirms the interpretation. The uppermost panel depicts the *bodhi* tree surrounded by a shrine upon whose roof are inscribed the words "*Bhagavato sakamunino bodho*," to be interpreted as "enlightenment of the Holy One Śakyāmuni."<sup>20</sup> The throne, which is surmounted by *triratna* emblems and stands beneath the *bodhi* tree encircled by a hypaethral shrine, represents, in this instance, the presence of the enlightened Buddha. The inclusion of a pillar or shrine that was built after the event represented in the relief need not invalidate this identification. First, a double layer of meaning appears to be intended. By including in a scene of the enlightenment the shrine around the tree that was built some time after the event, the artist surely intended that the viewer also recall the sacred site of the *bodhi* tree at Gayā. Secondly, there are other instances in which artists included later structures in scenes of a life event. In one of these a sixteenth-century artist painted events from the life of the seventh-century Tamil saint Sambandar around the temple tank at Madurai.<sup>21</sup> The sacred sites visited by Sambandar in seventh-century Tamilnāḍu consisted merely of hallowed *lingas* standing out in the open air beneath trees; the temples that enshrine them were built three hundred years later under Chola rule. The sixteenth-century artist, however, quite happily portrayed Sambandar visiting temples that never existed during the life portrayed. Temples had become the hallmark of the sites; it probably never occurred to him, nor to the Bhārhut artist, that such a portrayal might be considered anachronistic.

On the panel immediately below, four sets of gods,



separated by the compositional device of a tree, arrive to praise the enlightened Buddha—an event that occurred simultaneously with the enlightenment. Confirming the identification are the inscriptions, which identify the gods thus: “in the northern quarter, the three [classes of] Savaganisissas,” “in the eastern quarter, the Sudhāvāsa gods,” and “in the southern quarter, the six thousand Kāmāvacharas.” There does not appear to be an inscription in the damaged portion of the panel to identify the gods of the western direction, among whom winged figures and *nāgas* are clearly evident. To the far left, disconsolately drawing pictures on the ground with a stick, is the figure of Māra, whom certain texts<sup>22</sup> place at the event. Connecting the two panels on a visual level is an elephant-crowned column that rises from the lower into the upper level.

The lowest panel, depicting a group of female musicians and four dancing figures, also portrays an event simultaneous with the enlightenment; it represents the heavenly nymphs who in the tradition referred to above<sup>23</sup> arrive to honor the enlightened Buddha. The five inscriptions on this panel substantiate the identification of the scene. The names Subhadrā *apsarā*, Padmāvatī *apsarā*, and Alambusā *apsarā* are inscribed immediately beside three of the dancing figures; lack of space apparently required the name of the fourth, Mīsrakeśī *apsarā*, to be engraved along the pilaster that flanks the panel to the right. As a further aid to identification, the sculptor added the caption “music of the gods enlivened by mimic dance,” engraving it sideways along the fourth and fifth bands of the railing (from the left) that served as a lower border for the scene. The three panels on this face of the Prasenajit panel thus represent simultaneous events; they pertain to the enlightenment of the Buddha, as proclaimed by the inscription in the topmost panel, in which the Buddha’s presence is indicated by aniconic emblems. Read thus, the presence of the gods of the four directions and of the heavenly *apsarās* becomes meaningful.

A Bhārhut medallion that uses the monoscenic mode to tell the tale of Mucalinda *nāga*, who sheltered the Buddha from a torrential rain storm in the sixth week<sup>24</sup> after his enlightenment, provides further evidence of aniconism (fig. 6). The Buddha’s biography recounts that, oblivious to everything around him, the Buddha sat in deep contemplation under a tree, while Mucalinda coiled himself to form a seat for the Buddha, with his multiheaded hood serving as a parasol above the Buddha’s head. Mucalinda, portrayed in purely reptilian form beneath a tree, occupies the larger part of the medallion as he envelops the Buddha, represented by a seat and a pair



FIG. 6. Serpent Mucalinda Shelters the Buddha, Bhārhut. Courtesy AIIS.





Fig. 7. *The Enlightenment*, Gandhāra. Courtesy Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

of footprints. The identifying label on the pillar, above the medallion, reads "*Mucilido Nāgarāja*." This seems to be another clear instance of aniconism. The only way to suggest that the medallion represents the spot where the Buddha was sheltered by Mucalinda would be to propose that the spot was marked in later days by the image of a serpent enveloping a seat and footprints. But the fact that the serpent image was portrayed sheltering a seat and footprints rather than an anthropomorphic image of the Buddha in itself constitutes evidence of a one-time aniconic tradition.

The exact time and place of an event are certainly key indicators of the depiction of episodes from the Buddha's life; *śīltha* proponents maintain that these elements are always explicitly indicated in iconic life scenes but generally absent in aniconic renderings, which are hence, presumably, to be understood as sacred sites.<sup>25</sup> It is an interesting exercise to compare

two scenes depicting the enlightenment of the Buddha—an iconic version from Gandhāra (fig. 7) and the aniconic rendering (fig. 8) from Sānchi's west gateway (south pillar, inner face, top panel). The Gandhāran panel portrays the Buddha seated in the earth-touching gesture beneath the *pīpal* tree; the Sānchi panel depicts a seat beneath the tree. Māra's demon armies—some purely animal, others humanized but with animal heads—are placed on either side of the Buddha in the Gandhāran panel; at Sānchi, the demon armies, animal and humanized, are placed to the right of the Buddha. The Gandhāran panel portrays Māra and his warriors in the foreground, first attempting to confront the Buddha and then having abandoned the attempt; Māra is portrayed once more to the far left, sitting disconsolately in defeat. At Sānchi, the artist chose to portray defeated Māra accompanied by his three daughters, bowing before the Buddha. The Sānchi panel also portrays the gods,



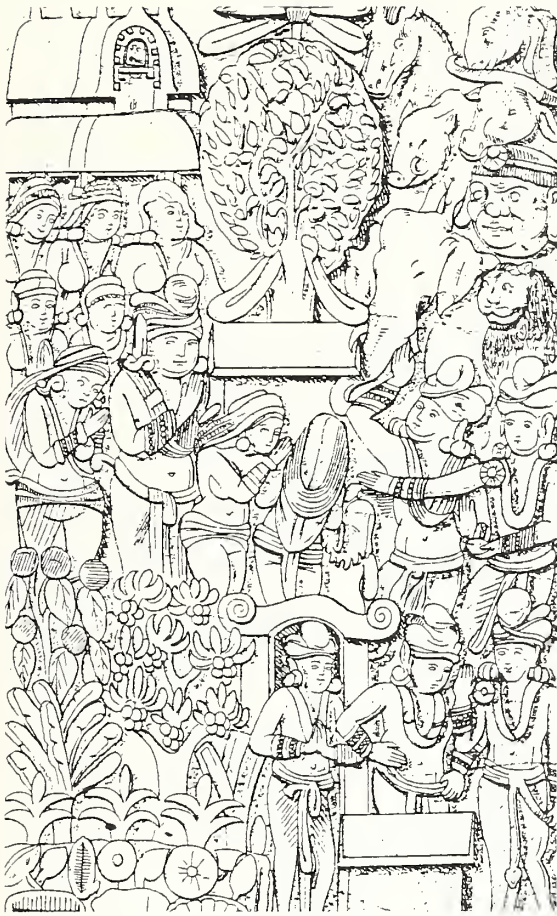


FIG. 8. *The Enlightenment, Sanchi west gateway.*  
After Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship*.

with their hands raised in a gesture of wonder as they marvel at the events. (The foreground of the Sanchi panel contains an additional detail that precedes the events of the enlightenment; referring to the earlier penance of the Buddha, it portrays three gods hovering anxiously over the weakened Buddha.) If place and time are key clues indicating a life scene, both elements occur in the aniconic portrayal at Sanchi.

Recent excavations in the Gandhāran region, where the anthropomorphic Buddha image appears in great numbers, have yielded a few instances of aniconism. A significant panel from Butkara, now in the museum at Swāt, portrays the Sāṅkissa descent of the Buddha from the heavens (fig. 9). A central ladder displays a pair of footprints upon its lowest rung, while flanking ladders carry standing figures of the gods Indra and Brahmā. Kneeling at the foot of the central ladder is the figure of nun Utpala, whom several traditions, including the accounts of Chinese pilgrims Faxian and Xuanxang, view as the first to greet the Buddha upon his descent to earth. Those who deny the exist-

ence of aniconism would see the ladders as the actual set of stairs set up at the pilgrimage site of Sāṅkissa, whose one-time existence is attested in the memoirs of the Chinese pilgrims. This, however, conveniently ignores the footprints—depicted both here and on a similar scene from Bhārhut<sup>26</sup>—which suggest that for one reason or another the artist avoided presenting the bodily image of the Buddha.<sup>27</sup> Even if the panel represents not the actual event but the pilgrimage site of Sāṅkissa, the portrayal of footprints in place of the bodily image can only suggest a tradition of aniconism that persisted into early Gandhāran art. In this context, one must further query why a Mathurā relief of the descent at Sāṅkissa, which portrays an anthropomorphic Buddha on the central ladder flanked by Indra and Brahmā on the side ladders, is unhesitatingly accepted as a life scene. After all, Xuanxang's account of the site of Sāṅkissa speaks of an image atop the steps. Why is it suddenly assumed that "depictions of events of the life of the Buddha, as opposed to the *pīṭhas*, became commonplace"<sup>28</sup> at the precise stage when the iconic replaces the aniconic?

It is instructive, in this context, to consider the many Gandhāran representations of the first sermon in which a seated anthropomorphic image of the Buddha reaches out a hand to turn a wheel that either



FIG. 9. *The Buddha's Descent at Sāṅkissa, Swāt, Gandhāra.*  
Courtesy Martha Carter.





FIG. 10. *The Buddha Turns the Wheel of Law*, Gandhāra. Courtesy ASI.



FIG. 11. *Buddha Touches a Triratna-Crowned Pillar*.  
Courtesy Martha Carter.



FIG. 12. *Buddha as an "Emblematic Body,"* Amarāvati.  
Courtesy Amarāvati Site Museum.



rests by itself or is placed upon a pillar or a *triratna* emblem (fig. 10). The Pāli or Sanskrit term for the first sermon helps explain this imagery; the event was known as *dharma-chakra-pravartana*, or “turning the wheel of the law,” which is literally the action of the Buddha. Such panels may also be understood as the anthropomorphic Buddha giving his sanction to the earlier homage paid to the wheel-topped pillar. In several instances, Gandhāran sculptors portrayed a standing Buddha figure touching a pillar topped with the *triratna*, or three jewels—the Buddha, the *Dhamma* or doctrine, and the *Samgha* or monastic community (fig. 11). Once again, the Buddha figure is apparently giving his sanction to this pivotal emblem of the Buddhist faith. Those who believe in the primacy of emblems may suggest that the anthropomorphic figure derives its validity from the earlier established emblem!

The problem of aniconism takes on an engrossing twist in the Amarāvati carvings, produced largely at a time when the anthropomorphic Buddha image had been introduced into the art of the northern centers of Gandhāra and Mathurā. While artists at Bhārhut and Sānci portrayed simple and often single emblems, those at Amarāvati made use of a series of emblems in combination to build up an “emblematic

body” for the Buddha. One instance of this system is an Amarāvati medallion portraying child Rāhula being presented to the Buddha (fig. 12). The footprints, cushioned throne, pillar of radiance, and crowning *triratna* may indeed be read visually to suggest the feet, limbs, torso, and head of the seated Buddha. The set of emblems stacked visually one above the other suggests a body for the Buddha, albeit an emblematic one. Equally persuasive as examples of this system are Amarāvati portrayals of the standing Buddha as an emblematic body. One such, on a now lost railing pillar that narrated a set of incidents from the story of the conversion of the Kāśyapas, may be examined in its context from an early drawing published by Fergusson (fig. 13). The fluted right segment, depicting a group of monks (the converted Kāśyapas) following the Buddha to Rājagriha, indicates the Buddha’s presence by a pair of footprints upon a lotus, a pillar of radiance, and a crowning *triratna* emblem. Such depictions are not “manifestations of regional *pīṭhas*, the local heritage of which is now lost.”<sup>29</sup> The emblems are not flanked by worshippers, lay or otherwise; rather, the manner in which the monks are placed behind the emblems clearly indicates the presence of the walking Buddha, whom the monks are following. Two such standing images,

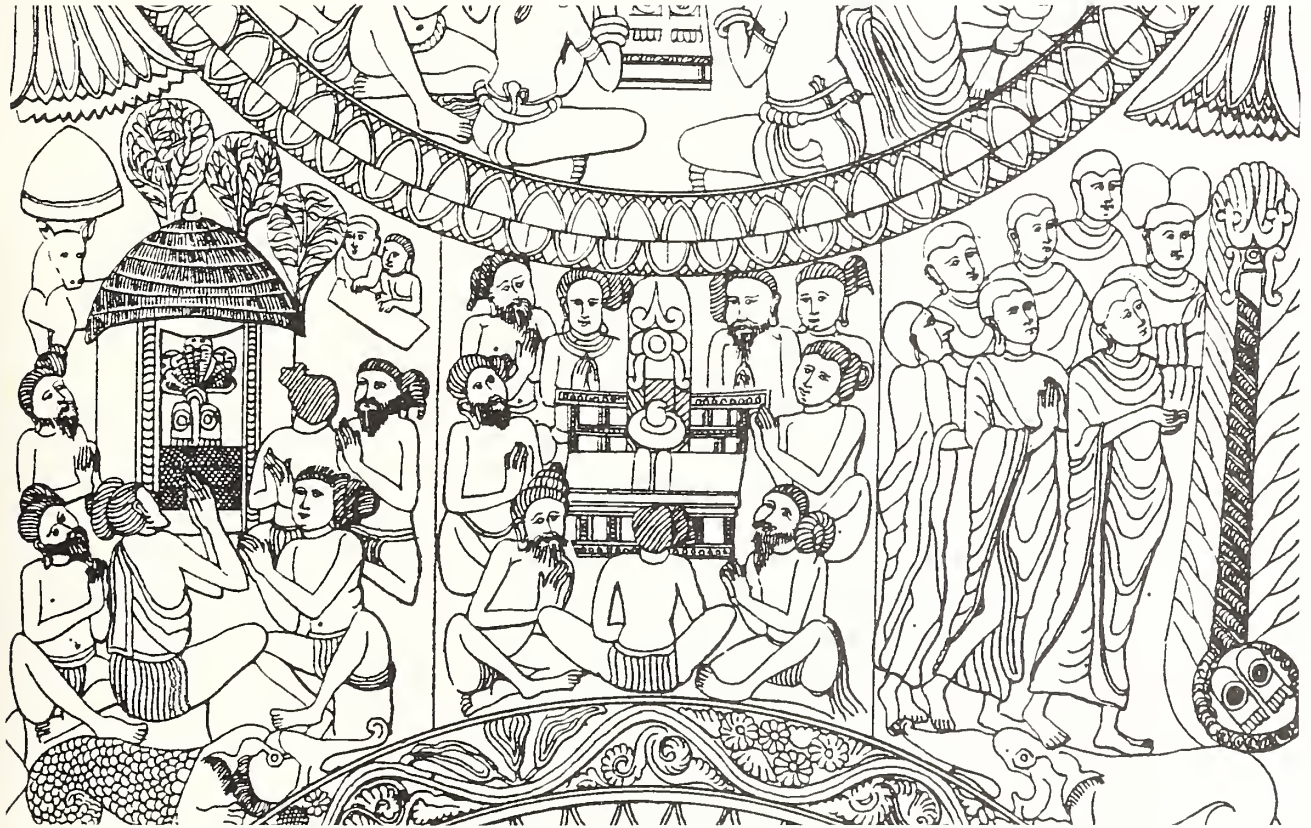


FIG. 13. Buddha as an “Emblematic Body,” Amarāvati. After Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship*.



which make use of the identical set of emblems, may be seen among the pillar fragments displayed in the Madras Museum; in addition, an exact replica of such an "image" was once carved along the badly damaged edge of the Nalagiri medallion, where the elephant bows at the feet of the Buddha (this identical set of emblems) followed by his monks. It is intriguing to note that even at the third/fourth-century site of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, artists produced at least one such emblematic standing Buddha body, which may be seen in a fragmentary piece preserved in the site museum.

### Sacred Sites

Sacred sites, or *ārthas*, and their place in the rite of pilgrimage, are crucial within the Indic religious tradition. The Buddha himself underscored their relevance for both the laity and the monastic community. A well-known passage from the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* states that on his deathbed, when asked by Ānanda what the monks should do after his death when they were no longer able to receive his audience or wait upon him, the Buddha replied:

There are four places, Ānanda, which the believing man should visit with feelings of reverence and awe. Which are the four?  
The place . . . at which . . . the Tathāgata was born . . .  
The place . . . at which . . . the Tathāgata attained to the supreme and perfect insight . . .  
The place . . . at which . . . the kingdom of righteousness was set on foot by the Tathāgata . . .  
The place . . . at which . . . the Tathāgata passed finally away in that utter passing away which leaves nothing whatever to remain behind.<sup>30</sup>

The importance of pilgrimage to the sacred spots of Buddhism is undeniable. However, it is questionable whether, in the early Buddhist ethos, pilgrimage to *ārthas* ever took priority over the life of the Buddha and, equally, whether artistic depictions of pilgrim-

age sites took precedence over portrayals of events from the life of the Buddha.

The imperial pilgrimage of Emperor Aśoka (ca. 273–232 B.C.) to thirty-two sacred spots associated with the life of the Buddha, commencing with the birthplace at Lumbini grove and ending with the *parinirvāṇa* site at Kūsinagara, is the archetypal pilgrimage. Importantly, however, Aśoka's pilgrimage emphasized the physical form in which the Buddha had lived the life that was being experienced, not merely the sanctity acquired by the site of an event. At Lumbini, the emperor asks a tree spirit who had witnessed the birth to describe the glory of the infant's form:

You witnessed his birth and saw  
his body adorned with the marks!  
You gazed upon his large lotus-like eyes!  
You heard in this wood  
the first delightful words  
of the leader of mankind!

...  
Tell me, goddess, what was it like—the magnificent moment of the Blessed One's birth?<sup>31</sup>

At Gayā, the emperor requests Serpent King Kālīka, who encountered the Buddha immediately prior to his enlightenment, to recount his bodily splendor:

You saw my peerless Master  
his complexion like blazing gold  
and his face like the autumn moon.  
Recount for me some of the Buddha's qualities,  
tell me what it was like—  
the splendor of the Sugata.<sup>32</sup>

Their eyewitness accounts, which send Aśoka into an ecstasy of devotion, stress the person of the Buddha and his charismatic qualities.<sup>33</sup> Even in a pilgrimage cycle, the emphasis is on the desire to experience the Buddha himself in all his glory. It is difficult to sustain the argument that early Buddhist artists and



FIG. 14. Visit of Emperor Aśoka to the Bodhi Tree at Gayā, Sānci. Courtesy ASI.



FIG. 15. *Worship of a Stūpa, Sānchi.* Courtesy AIIS.

devotees were not primarily concerned with the biography of the Buddha.

Artists at Sānchi chose to depict on their monument two momentous events in the life of King Aśoka. Perhaps not surprisingly, both revolve around visits to sacred sites—the incident of the *bodhi* tree and the encounter with the *nāgas* at the Rāmagrāma *stūpa*—although neither episode was part of Aśoka's Buddhist pilgrimage. There is universal agreement that the lowest architrave of the east gateway at Sānchi (outer face) depicts the pilgrimage of Aśoka to the *bodhi* tree (fig. 14). In order to revive the dying tree, which had been subjected to a curse by his jealous chief queen Tishyarakshitā, Aśoka is said to have ordered a thousand jars of fragrant water to be poured over its roots. The architrave portrays Aśoka and his queen to one side and courtiers with jars of water on the other. It is noteworthy that the tree is portrayed surrounded by an elaborate shrine while textual sources, including the *Aśokāvadāna*, merely speak of building a platform from which the tree could be watered.<sup>34</sup> Those who consider time and place of the

utmost importance in the interpretation of a scene might note this instance of a sacred site where the artist was unconcerned that the shrine did not exist at the moment of this famous pilgrimage. The second Aśokan episode at Sānchi, as everyone agrees, is the emperor's visit to the Rāmagrāma *stūpa*, portrayed on the central architrave (outer face) of the south gateway. To one side of the *stūpa* is Aśoka in his chariot, while to the other side stand the hosts of *nāgas*, the serpent beings who have been worshipping the *stūpa* and who dissuaded Aśoka from removing the relics in order to redistribute them among the many *stūpas* he was building throughout his empire.

In a certain number of reliefs at Bhārhut and Sānchi, the *stūpa* and pillar represent memorials erected at sacred sites of pilgrimage and clearly do not indicate the presence of the Buddha. One such instance is the worship of a *stūpa* on the west pillar of the north gateway at Sānchi (fig. 15). Here, certainly, is no portrayal of the great decease of the Buddha, which occurred at Kuśināra. Instead a group of northerners dressed in tunics, cloaks, and boots—some





FIG. 16. Site of Sārnāth, Sānchi south gateway. Courtesy AIIS.



FIG. 17. Site of Bodh Gayā, Sānchi south gateway. Courtesy AIIS.

wearing peaked caps and others with filets bound around their heads—honor a sacred relic mound with music, dance, and offerings. The only clue to the site of this *stūpa*<sup>35</sup> is the northern costume of its worshippers.

A second instance of the portrayal of sacred sites is represented by two panels, one featuring a pillar (fig. 16) and the other a tree (fig. 17), on adjacent sides of the west pillar of the south gateway. The pillar, with deer clustered at its base and groups of turbaned worshippers on either side, seems to represent the site of Sārnāth; the tree circled by a shrine on the adjoining panel indicates the site of Bodh Gayā. In these instances, the pillar is not intended to portray the Buddha's presence and his preaching of the first sermon any more than the tree is meant to suggest the aniconic presence of the Buddha. Their context, within the panel's composition, makes this evident. It is vital to recognize the multivalence of the major Buddhist emblems; in different contexts, they may represent the Buddha, portray sacred sites, or make

reference to Buddhist attributes.

It is significant that the Buddha's words on the importance of pilgrimage, in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* passage quoted earlier, were prompted by Ānanda's query regarding the plight of the monks who could no longer serve him or receive his audience. In his reply, the Buddha speaks of pilgrimage for both monks and laity:

And there will come, Ānanda, to such spots, believers, brethren and sisters of the order, or devout men and devout women, and will say, "Here was the Tathāgata born!", or "Here did the Tathāgata attain to the supreme and perfect insight!" or "Here was the kingdom of righteousness set on foot by the Tathāgata!" or, "Here the Tathāgata passed away in that utter passing away which leaves nothing whatever to remain behind!"<sup>36</sup>

It is strange that lay worship alone should be highlighted by those who wish to explain emblematic reliefs as portrayals of pilgrimage sites.<sup>37</sup> These depictions of lay worship may have occurred by chance in the course of portraying, on each monument, no more



than six to eight scenes of worship. While it is true that the *Mahāparinibbhāna Sutta* entrusts the Buddha's relics to the laity rather than the clergy, recent Buddhological studies make it amply evident that the Buddhist ecclesiastic community was closely involved from the very beginning with the relic cult and the *stūpa*, with cultic practice of every kind, as also with religious giving and with the image of the Buddha.<sup>38</sup>

The denial of aniconism and the accent on sacred sites make it necessary to address panels from the site of Amarāvati (and also Nāgārjunakoṇḍa) that have always been viewed as portraying the birth of the Buddha (fig. 18). These repetitively portray Queen Māyā standing under a tree; to one side are her maids, and to the other side are the gods, headed by Indra and Brahmā. Upon the swaddling clothes held by the gods are a pair of infant footprints (occasionally seven infant footprints), generally interpreted as evidence of aniconism and representing the event

from the sacred biography in which the infant Buddha took his first seven steps. Is there an alternate way of interpreting such panels, and could they depict homage at a sacred site? It would be necessary to assume that an image of Queen Māyā beneath a *śāl* tree, flanked by maids and the gods, was set up at an early date at Lumbini, site of the miraculous birth. Of this we have no evidence; certainly the *Aśokāvadāna* makes no reference to any such images. An additional intractable problem is the presence of the infant footprints. Why would an artist have portrayed footprints, rather than a tiny Buddha child, in a group of modeled figures if not because he was constrained by a previous aniconic tradition? Any suggestion of pagentry reenactment runs into insuperable problems. Even if such plays were performed, what place do infant footprints, rather than a little child, have in them? Only the theory of aniconism offers a reasonable explanation for the large number of such



FIG. 18. *Birth of Buddha*, Amarāvati. Courtesy Trustees of the British Museum.





FIG. 19. *Birth of Buddha*, Gandhāra. Courtesy Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

depictions. Indeed, Gandhāra provides numerous panels with a similar arrangement of figures, except that the infant Buddha child in anthropomorphic form is now received upon the swaddling clothes held by the gods (fig. 19). No one questions that these Gandhāran panels depict the actual birth of the Buddha or suggests that they portray either the sacred site of Lumbini or pageantry reenactments of the birth. The obvious compositional similarity of the Gandhāran panels to those from Amarāvati (and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa) reinforces the conclusion that the latter too portray the birth of the Buddha, who, on occasion, is represented at these sites in aniconic form.

From Amarāvati, a site largely executed after the anthropomorphic Buddha was a known feature in the art of the northern Kushāṇ sites, come two portrayals of actual images, one as a bas relief and one

apparently as a metal icon. They are noticed here as possible representations of worship at local sites. Both portrayals come from slabs, some eleven feet high and carved in three registers, that cased the dome of the Amarāvati *stūpa*. One dome slab, drastically pared down for reuse in modern construction, survives in two registers; the lower is a scene of worship of a now-lost object, while the upper depicts the adoration of a circular medallion with a relief carving of a seated Buddha, placed upon a seat beneath a *bodhi* tree, with footprints below the seat (fig. 20). Since the Amarāvati *stūpa* railing itself is renowned for its circular carved medallions, the scene appears to represent a local site where one such medallion was worshipped; if that is the case, the artist of the dome slab perhaps added the footprints to reinforce the sanctity of the medallion. It is intriguing to note that Jain literature provides evidence of



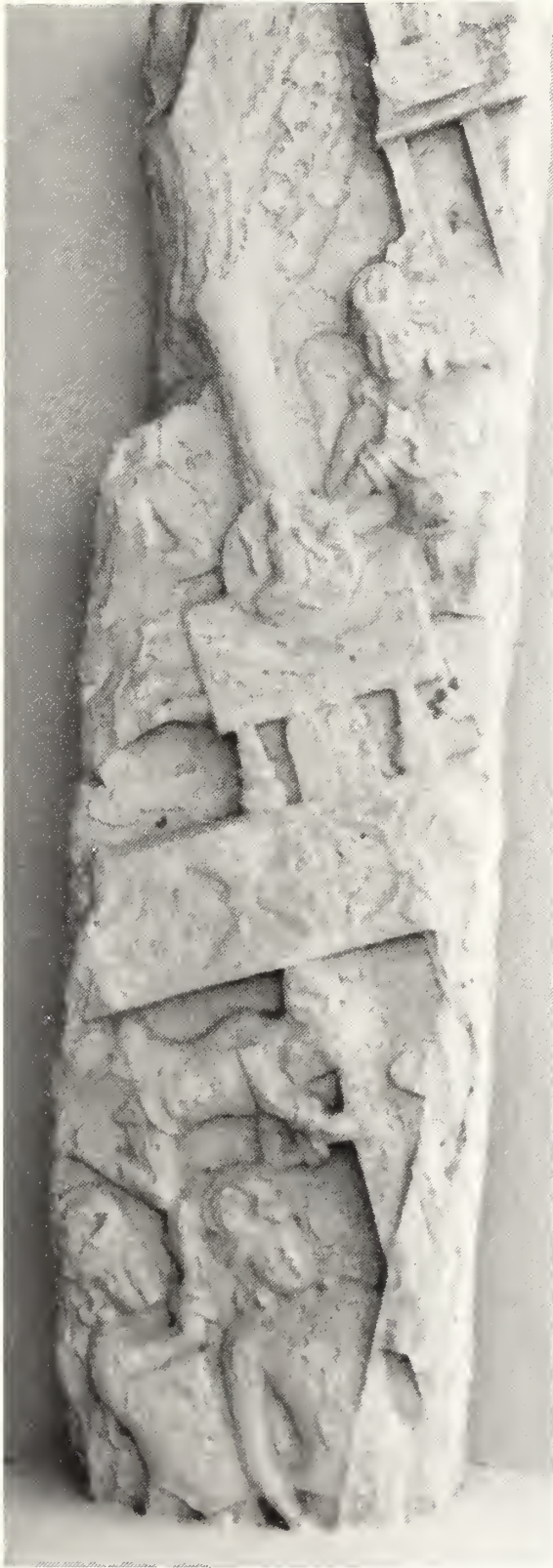


FIG. 20. *Homage to Relief Medallion of the Buddha*, dome slab from Amarāvati. Courtesy Amarāvati Site Museum.

the worship of plaques placed upon thrones beneath trees. U. P. Shah quotes the canonical *Aupāṇṇika Sūtra*'s passage on the Pūrṇabhadra Chaitya, which speaks of a *prithivi-śilā-paṭṭa* placed upon a lion throne and resting against the trunk of the best *āsoka* tree in a forest grove; the addition of the word *prithivi* (earth) to the *śilā-paṭṭa* (slab) suggests to Shah a terracotta plaque.<sup>39</sup> The noncanonical Jain text *Vasudevahiṇḍī* (ca. A.D. 350–450) similarly speaks of a *śilā* of *yaksha* Sumanā, placed upon a platform beneath an *āsoka* tree, where it was worshipped.<sup>40</sup> The second such Amarāvati slab, now missing, is known only from an 1816 drawing made by Colonel Mackenzie; it represents the worship of a portable shrine placed beneath a *bodhi* tree and containing a Buddha icon flanked by attendants (fig. 21). Further studies may clarify the exact significance of these two intriguing site-related portrayals.

### Attributes

The third critical aspect in the interpretation of emblems is the recognition that, on occasion, the pillar may represent neither the first sermon of the Buddha nor the site of the first sermon but rather the doctrine that the Buddha enunciated on that

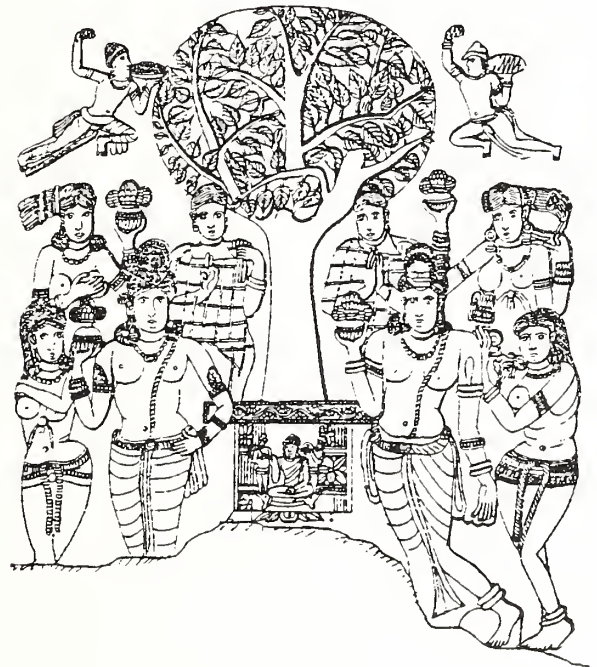


FIG. 21. *Homage to Portable Shrine with Buddha Icon*, Amarāvati. After Burgess, *The Buddhist Stupas of Amaravati and Jaggayyapeta*.





FIG. 22. *Homage to the Triratna, Gandhāra.* Courtesy Peshawar Museum.

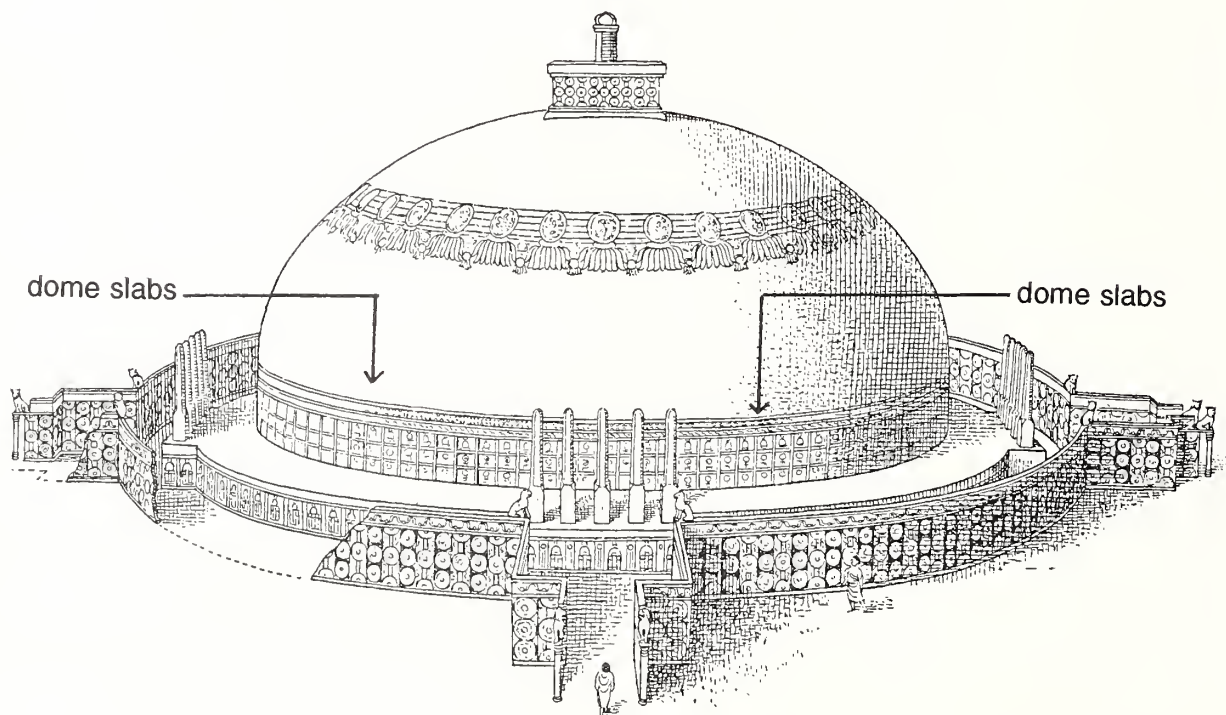


FIG. 23. *Amarāvati stūpa* showing location of dome slabs. After Barrett, *Sculptures from Amaravati in the British Museum*.

momentous occasion. In like manner, the sacred tree and the seat beneath may indicate neither the event of the Buddha's enlightenment nor the site of Bodh Gayā but the wisdom and supremacy of the Buddha established at that event. Similarly, the *stūpa* may indicate neither the great decease of the Buddha nor a sacred *stūpa* site but rather the Buddha's achievement in finally severing the bonds of rebirth. Not infrequently, the main intention of the artist depicting a pillar, tree, or *stūpa* was to emphasize the Buddhist truth to which it attests. Such seems to have been the case with the emblems carved on the "dies" or blocks between the architraves of the Sānci toranas, as also on the uprights between architraves. However, due to their capacity for multiple reference, emblems intended to indicate the attributes of the Buddhist faith also serve to remind the viewer of the Buddha himself and of the site with which an attribute is associated.

A number of Gandhāran panels depict the worship of the Buddha's halo, as also of the *triratna* emblem, or three jewels of Buddhism (fig. 22). A declaration of belief in this triple refuge—the Buddha, the *Dhamma* or doctrine, and the *Samgha* or monastic community—is a key expression of commitment to Buddhism. New adherents to the faith would repeat three times their belief in this triple refuge; the formula was chanted repeatedly in Buddhist devotional worship; and Buddhist occasions commenced with its affirmation. The great store placed on declaration of belief in this triple refuge is well exemplified by a tale in the *Divyāvadāna*. A minor god, destined to be born from the womb of a sow, was reborn instead in the Tushita heavens by the mere expedient of following Śakra's advice to repeat: "I go for refuge to the Buddha, the best of men; I go for refuge to the *Dhamma*, the best of the destroyers of desire; I go for refuge to the *Samgha*, the best of orders."<sup>41</sup> Gandhāran panels centering on the halo, or *triratna*, depict neither the worship of the Buddha in aniconic form nor worship at any specific site; rather they represent homage paid to the Buddhist faith itself through adoration of its attributive emblems.

The most impressive use of emblems as attributes is apparent in the decoration of the dome of the Amarāvati *stūpa* (fig. 23). Each of the two hundred and more dome slabs, roughly eleven feet in height and three feet wide, was divided into three registers, and, during the final phase of embellishment of the *stūpa*,<sup>42</sup> their design followed a standard repetitive scheme (fig. 24). The lowest register depicts either a tree sheltering a seat or the Buddha himself seated beneath a tree. The central register usually portrays a wheel upon a pillar, although occasionally the



FIG. 24. Dome slab with attributes, Amarāvati. Courtesy Trustees of the British Museum.



image of the preaching Buddha took its place. The upper register invariably portrays a *stūpa*. In each register, the emblem, or the image in characteristic pose that replaced the emblem, is flanked by worshippers. The slabs are completed by a band of running lions and a band of *triratna* emblems.

The precise interpretation of these dome slabs is crucial to an appreciation of the Buddhist message of the site. On this occasion, the tree or the image beneath the tree represents neither the event of the enlightenment nor the site of the event; the wheel or the preaching Buddha represents neither the first sermon nor its site; and the *stūpa* stands neither for the great decease of the Buddha nor for a *stūpa* site. The intention seems to lie in quite another direction. While inextricably connected with the life events of the Buddha and the sites at which these occurred, the dome slabs refer to the attributes suggested by the emblems. They repetitively reiterate the belief in the three jewels of Buddhism: the Buddha (lowest register), the *Dhamma* or doctrine (central panel), and the *Samgha* or community of monks (top register).<sup>43</sup> For the lay worshippers and the monks circumambulating this large hemispherical monument, the slabs were a visual affirmation of the formula that was upon their lips: "*Buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi, Dhammam śaraṇam gacchāmi, saṃgham śaraṇam gacchāmi*," or "I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Doctrine, I take refuge in the Monastic community." For a group of largely illiterate laymen and laywomen who made the pilgrimage to this great *stūpa*, a visual reiteration of the creed was an effective means of religious propagation. The upper row of lions may have been intended as a reference to the Buddha as *śākyasimha*, or "lion of the Śākyas," while the topmost band of *triratnas* serves only to reemphasize the message of the dome slabs.

## Conclusion

While it is true that Foucher, writing in the first decades of the twentieth century, misstated the nature and extent of aniconism, he was certainly accurate in perceiving its existence. No doubt, the general correlation of Hīnayāna with aniconism and Mahāyāna with the anthropomorphic image is false. No doubt, too, early scholars did not perceive that certain reliefs on the early Buddhist monuments depict the devotions performed at sacred sites. However, denying the existence of aniconism is equally invalid.

I argue that an emblem may carry different meanings in varying contexts. The worship of a *bodhi* tree may, in certain circumstances, be interpreted as the enlightenment, and thus a scene in the biography of the Buddha. In other instances it may represent devotions at the site of Bodh Gayā. In yet another context, it merely serves as a reminder of the supreme wisdom of the Buddha. One must accept the multilayered significance of many early bas reliefs and recognize that more than one meaning may have been intended by the artist, as well as read by the ancient beholder. Twentieth-century analytical viewers may find it strange that a scene portraying the enlightenment of the Buddha should include a shrine erected two hundred years after the event. They may also consider it anachronistic that a panel portraying Aśoka's visit to the site of the sacred *bodhi* tree should include a shrine built only after the visit. Yet artists and devotees of the first century B.C. probably viewed such a scene as a perfectly reasonable way to present a reminder of both the sacred site at Bodh Gayā and an event in the life of the Buddha or of King Aśoka.

## Notes

1. See E. H. Johnston, ed., *Aśvaghōṣa's Buddhacarita, or, Acts of the Buddha, in Three Parts* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984 reprint), xciii.
2. Peter Khoroché, ed., *Once the Buddha was a Monkey: Ārya Śūra's Jātakamālā* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), xvii, describes Śūra's constant use of double entendre as the despair of the translator.
3. Alfred Foucher, "The Beginnings of Buddhist Art," in his *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art and Other Essays in Indian and Central-Asian Archaeology*, trans. L. A. Thomas (Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1972), 1–29. This essay first appeared as "Les débuts de l'art bouddhique," *Journal Asiatique*, 10th ser., 17 (January–February 1911): 55–79.
4. Susan Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art and the Theory of Aniconism," *Art Journal* 49 (Winter 1990): 401–7. See also her *The Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain* (New York: Weatherhill, 1986), esp. 70–73, 98–100. For further understanding of their argument, see also John C. Huntington, "Sowing the Seeds of the Lotus: A Journey to the Great Pilgrimage Sites of Buddhism," pts. 1–5, *Orientalism* 16, no. 11 (Nov. 1985): 46–61, 17, no. 2 (Feb. 1986): 28–43, 17, no. 3 (March 1986): 32–46, 17, no. 7 (July 1986): 28–40, 17, no. 9 (Sept. 1986): 46–58. See also his "Pilgrimage as Image: The Cult of the *Aṣṭamahāprātihārya*," pts. 1–2, *Orientalism* 18, no. 4 (April 1987): 55–63, 18, no. 8 (August 1987): 56–68. Though Susan Huntington asks that critics await her forthcoming book, we have considered it necessary to address their arguments because these have been presented in a volume (not just in specialized journals) that has entered the textbook repertoire as early as 1985.
5. W. Geddie, ed., *Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary* (Edinburgh and London, 1959); the negative connotation sometimes associated with the word is absent here. However, *The Random House Dictionary* speaks of "opposition to the use of idols," and the Webster of "a primitive form of worship."
6. S. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 405: "Essentially, I suggest that the early Buddhist art of India was not primarily concerned with the biography of Śakyāmuni Buddha, as has been assumed for so many decades."
7. Those interested in my classification of narration may refer to Vidya Dehejia, "On Modes of Narration in Early Buddhist Art," *Art Bulletin* 72 (September 1990): 374–92.
8. John Huntington's caption to this panel reads: "Relief depicting the temple of the First Sermon," which suggests the site of Sārnāth. See his "Sowing the Seeds," pt. 2, 34.
9. Since early Buddhist inscriptions are so easily readable, I have used my own translations to avoid burdening the text unduly with footnotes. In the single instance where variant readings are possible, a note has been added.
10. Sten Konow, ed., "Kharoṣṭhi Inscriptions, with the Exception of Those of Aśoka," *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, vol. 2, pt. 1 (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1929), 99.
11. Gregory Schopen, "On Monks, Nuns, and 'Vulgar' Practices: The Introduction of the Image Cult into Indian Buddhism," *Artibus Asiae* 49, no. 1/2 (1989): 153–68.
12. The terms "Hīnayāna" and "Mahāyāna" are being used, somewhat loosely, for convenience of reference.
13. John S. Strong's statement in *The Legend of King Aśoka: A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 34, that, according to Tāranātha, the poet Māṛceja rewrote his hymns in praise of the Buddha in the form of dramatic performances to be staged by troupes of actors is misleading. Tāranātha merely states that Māṛceja's *stotras*, or hymns of praise, were recited even by singers, dancers, and jesters; there is no suggestion of dramatic performances and enactment of plays. See Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya, trans., *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India* (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1970), 134. A detailed search through Buddhist texts for any evidence of pageants uncovered just one instance—in a tale titled "The Overreached Actor" from Anton Schiefner's *Tibetan Tales, Derived from Indian Sources* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1882), which is an English version of selected stories from the Tibetan translation of the original Sanskrit *Mūlasarvastivādin Vinaya*. According to the tale, an actor, having acquired the facts of the Buddha's life up to the enlightenment, pitched a booth at Rājagriha and sounded a drum. When a great crowd gathered, he exhibited in a drama the events from the life of the Buddha (p. 244). The tale adds that he made a good profit from this venture. This is intriguing information but certainly not the same as a regular tradition of reenactment of significant events from the Buddha's life.
14. S. Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, 99. John Huntington's suggestion ("Sowing the Seeds," pt. 4, 30) that the monkey's offering of a bowl of honey at Vaiśālī (west pillar of north gateway at Sānchi) "maybe a reenactment of the event at the site before a group of pilgrims" is even more problematic.
15. N. G. Majumdar, "The Bajaur Casket of the Reign of Menander," *Epigraphia Indica* 24 (1932): 1–7; See also *Epigraphia Indica* 26 (1942): 318–22; *Epigraphia Indica* 27 (1947): 52–58.
16. Gregory Schopen, "On the Buddha and his Bones: The Conception of a Relic in the Inscriptions from Nāgārjunikonda," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 108, no. 4 (1988): 527–37.
17. See n. 6 above.
18. Evidence for this distribution will be found in my forthcoming full-length study of Buddhist visual narratives.
19. The canonical "Śamanaphala Sutta" of the *Dīgha Nikaya*, which narrates this story at length, specifies that the incident occurred on the night of a full moon. See Maurice Walshe, *Thus Have I Heard: The Long Discourses of the Buddha* (London: Wisdom, 1987), 91–110.
20. My interpretation is at variance with H. Luders, *Bhārhuṭ Inscriptions, Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, vol. 2, pt. 2 (Ootacamund: Government Epigraphist for India, 1963),



- 95, who reads the phrase as "the building around the Bodhi tree of the holy Sakamuni." Much as I respect Luders, there is no word in the inscription that could be read as "building." R. C. Childers, *A Dictionary of the Pali Language* (1875; reprint, New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1979), 93, col. 2, specifies, "BODHO, Knowledge, wisdom, intelligence; supreme knowledge, Buddhahship." The tree is not included under BODHO. Admittedly, Childers (93, col. 2) gives three meanings for BODHI: the knowledge possessed by a Buddha, *arhat*, etc. (as in BODHO); a Bodhi tree; a precept. It is worth noting that each of the inscribed medallions at Bhārhut that depicts the worship of the tree of one of the previous Buddhas (five such medallions survive) uses the term *bodhi*, while in the case of the Buddha Vessabha, the label specifies *bodhi śāla*, or the *śāla* tree (of enlightenment).
21. See K. Dessigane, P. Z. Pattabhiraman, and J. Fillozat, *La Légende de jeux de Civa à Madurai* (Pondicherry: Institut Français d'Indologie, 1960), vol. 2, pl. 34.
  22. The *Lalitavistara* places Māra at the scene and immediately thereafter speaks of the arrival of the Siddhāvāsa gods. See Rajendralala Mitra, *The Lalitavistara* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1877), 457 (end of ch. 22 and beginning of ch. 23).
  23. Mitra, *Lalitavistara*, 451 (ch. 22).
  24. The exact week varies in different textual accounts.
  25. S. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 402, where she italicizes the two words to emphasize their importance.
  26. Susan Huntington has bypassed the problem of the footprints in the Sāṅkissa depiction at Bhārhut, both in her *Art of Ancient India*, 72f., and in her more recent article "Early Buddhist Art," 404.
  27. The Bhārhut panel avoids the human form even for the gods Indra and Brahmā. Such an avoidance is to be seen in the context of Hindu worship which, in the Vedic period, was concerned only with sacrifice and in which images of the gods played no part. Few early images of Hindu deities exist. It was mainly with the spread of Purāṇic Hinduism that images of the Hindu gods proliferated. This fact has been largely lost sight of, particularly with the nineteenth-century projection of Hindu India as a polytheistic country whose multitudes of gods had multiple heads and hands!
  28. J. Huntington, "Pilgrimage as Image," pt. 1, 56.
  29. J. Huntington, "Pilgrimage as Image," pt. 1, 56.
  30. T. W. Rhys Davids, *The Buddhist Suttas* (London: Dover, 1969), 90.
  31. Strong, *Legend of King Aśoka*, 246.
  32. Strong, *Legend of King Aśoka*, 249.
  33. The point is well made by Strong, *Legend of King Aśoka*, 120–22.
  34. Strong, *Legend of King Aśoka*, 266.
  35. John Huntington's suggestion that this is the Vaiśālī *stūpa* is based on the premise that since the monkey incident on the same pillar occurred at Vaiśālī, all other incidents refer to the same site. See his "Sowing the Seeds," pt. 4, 29–31. Such a premise, as I shall show in my book-length study, is unjustified: frequently, the Sānci pillars group together incidents that have no geographical or temporal connection with one another.
  36. Davids, *Buddhist Suttas*, 91.
  37. The *ārthatheory* states that the emphasis on sacred pilgrimage to sites never waned. One has to ask, then, why representations of the lay worship of trees, pillars, and *stūpas* do not occur at Gandhāra or Ajañṭā or on Gupta monuments. Would not the absence of such emblematic depictions, after the period of the sites of Bhārhut, Sānci, and Amarāvati, indicate that emphasis on devotions at sacred sites faded into insignificance, as did the "exaltation of lay worship"? It is perhaps pertinent to quote here S. Huntington's "Early Buddhist Art," 408, n. 43, in which she takes a less rigid stand on aniconism: "At this time, I am unable to predict whether there are indeed some images that require a Buddha figure and must be seen as truly 'aniconic' in the sense that they employ a symbol as a substitute for what should be an anthropomorphic representation. However, even if a few images are truly aniconic, the vast majority are not, and the role of 'aniconism' has been vastly overemphasized, ultimately leading to the misinterpretation of most of the extant art."
  38. Schopen, "On the Buddha and His Bones," 527–37, and his "On Monks, Nuns," 153–68.
  39. U. P. Shah, *Studies in Jaina Art* (Banares: Jaina Cultural Research Society, 1955), 68.
  40. Shah, *Studies in Jaina Art*, 67.
  41. James R. Ware, "Studies in the Divyāvadāna," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 48 (1928): 159–65. The tale is titled "Śūkarikāvadāna."
  42. While the three registers of dome slabs belonging to earlier work at the site are decorated with a range of themes, including the *chakravartin*, the great departure, Rāmagrāma, the enlightenment, and certain unidentified scenes, all later slabs conform to the scheme described.
  43. I. K. Sarma (verbal communication), who seems to agree with such an interpretation, informs me that dome slabs recently unearthed at the site reveal the letters *bo* and *dha*, for "*bodhi* tree" and "*dhammachakra*," presumably inscribed as shorthand notations for sculptors' information. As he rightly pointed out, Gaṇapati Sthapati, who is in charge of the Sculpture School at Mahabalipuram, similarly writes *Naṭa* and *Vi* upon slabs of stone for "*Naṭarāja*" and "*Vishnu*." Why should the *stūpa* stand for the Saṃgha? I suggest it was because the relic mound was indeed the center of the monastery and the very *raison d'être* for the formation of the monastic community that congregated around a *stūpa*.

# THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF AJAṆṬĀ

By WALTER M. SPINK

## *Overview of Ajaṇṭā's Stratigraphy*

THE AJAṆṬĀ CAVES, CUT INTO THE CURVING SCARP OF A DEEP gorge in western India's Deccan plateau (fig. 1), have long been renowned because of the beauty of their miraculously preserved paintings, all dating from the period when this Buddhist monastic site flourished over fifteen hundred years ago. Although impressive excavations had already been made at Ajaṇṭā by 100

B.C., it is the later excavations that are particularly famous. Nearly all scholars agree that work on these began during the reign of the Vākāṭaka emperor Hariṣeṇa sometime during the latter half of the fifth century A.D.; traditionalists have long argued that the cutting and painting of the extensive cave complex then continued for some two centuries or more.

By contrast, I have tried to prove that this great later phase of work at Ajaṇṭā represents a sudden

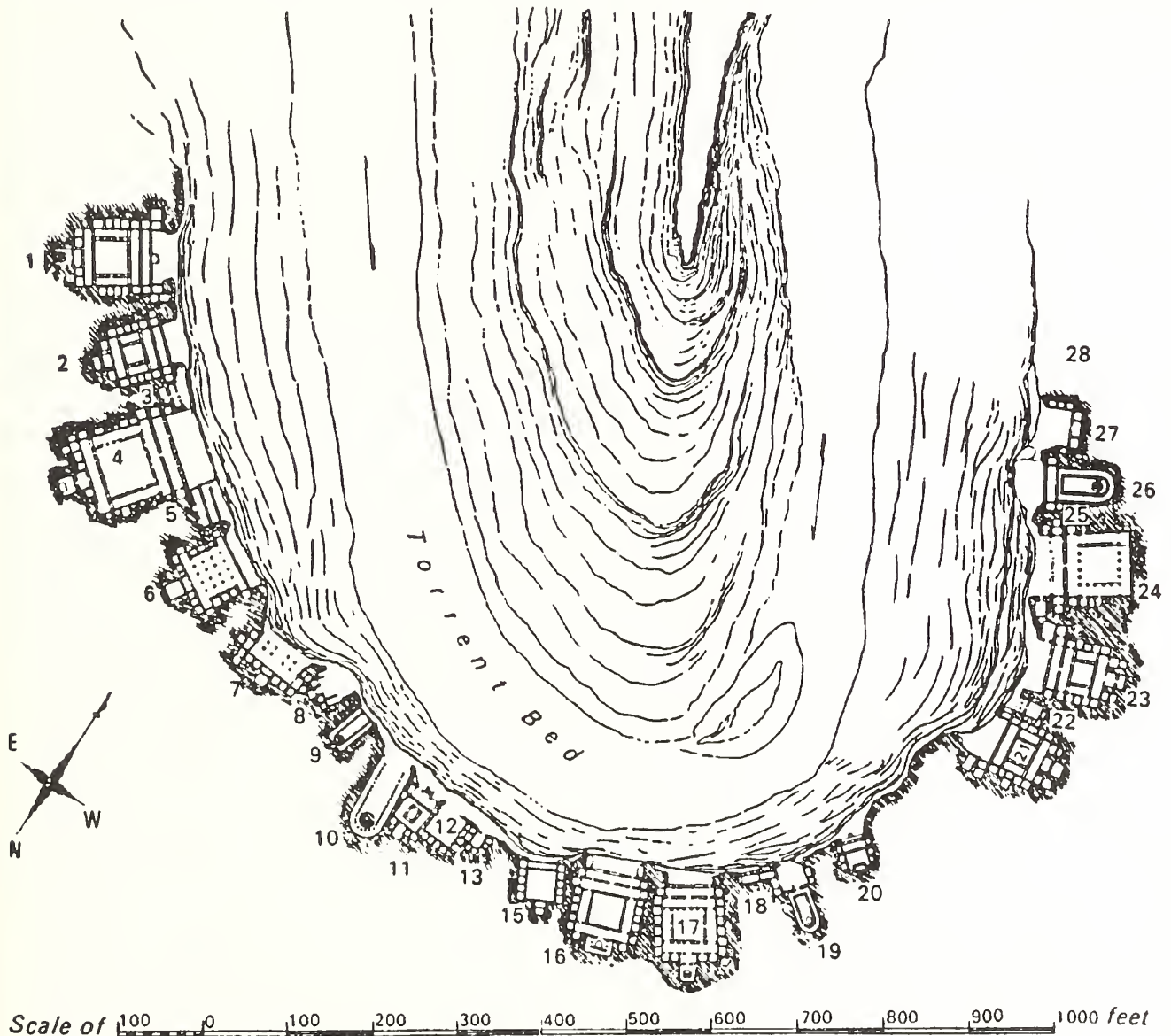
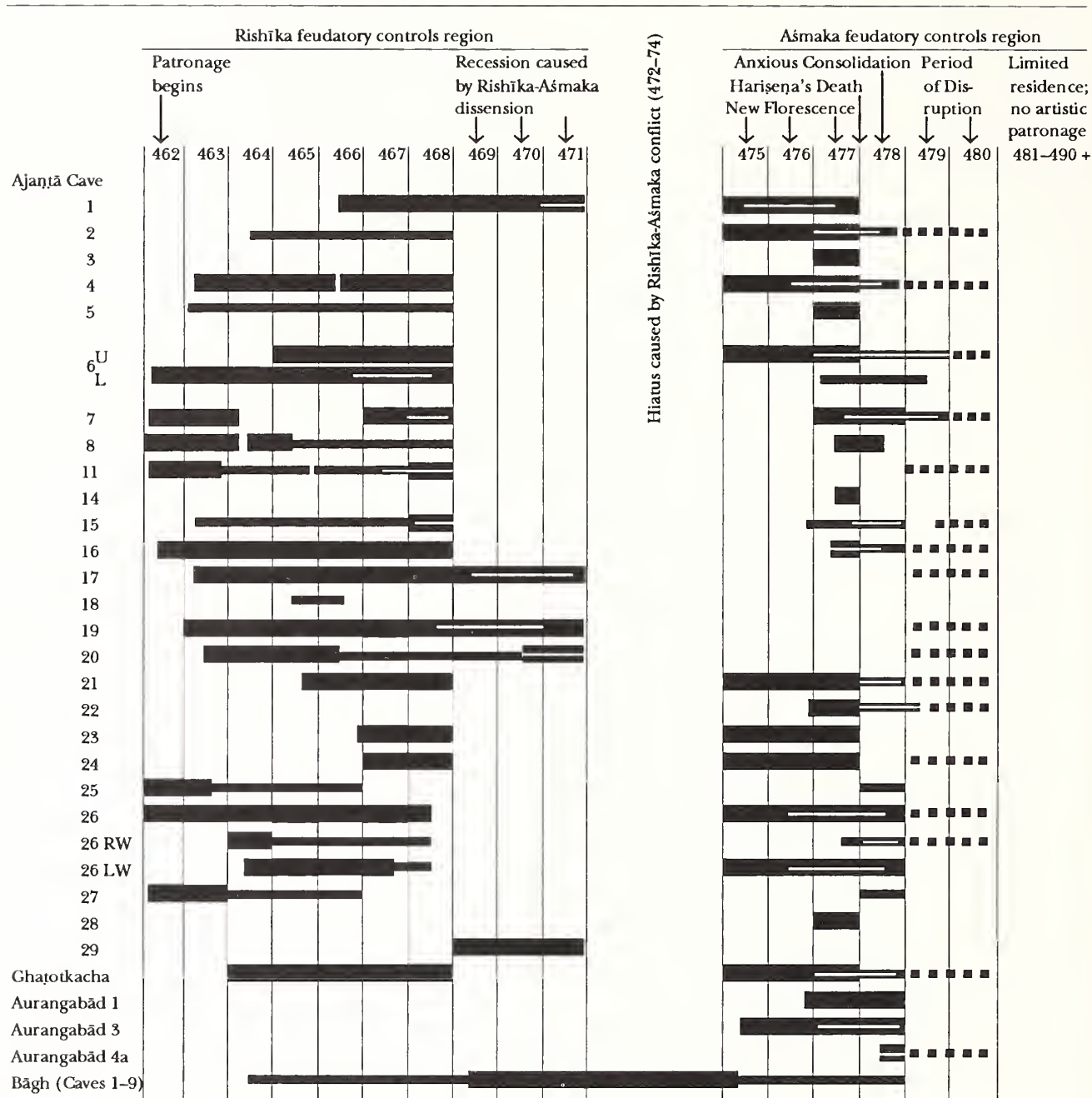


FIG. 1. General Plan of the Ajaṇṭā Caves. After J. Burgess, "Report on the Buddhist Cave Temples," A.S.W.I. 4 (London, 1883), pl. xiv.



TABLE 1. Vākātaka Patronage at Ajañtā and Related Sites (462–80)\*

*Known Major Patrons: Ajañtā's Vākātaka Phase (A.D. 462–80)*

Cave 1: The Vākātaka emperor Hariṣeṇa: rules 460–77.

Cave 16: Varāhadeva, Harishena's Chief Minister: patronage continues until 478.

Caves 17, 18, 19, 20, probably 29: King of Rishika (named Upendragupta?): rules over Ajañtā region until defeated by Āsmakas between 472 and 474.

Cave 26 complex (including Caves 25 and 27): Buddhahadra, a monk "attached in friendship [to the minister of Āsmaka] through many successive births": active patron from 462 to mid-468 and 475–78.

Cave 4: Mathuradasa, wealthy "owner of the cave": active patron 462–68 and 475–78.

\*Specific dates given are only close approximations; a margin of at least a year or two should be allowed. For a detailed review of the evidence for this short chronology, see "The Vākātaka's Flowering and Fall" (referenced in n. 2).

burgeoning of pious activity under the sponsorship of Hariṣeṇa and the elite of his empire during a period of scarcely more than a decade and a half (ca. 462–77). Even including the quickly fatal years of the site's disruption, this main phase of work at Ajaṇṭā was all accomplished by ca. 480, after less than two decades of artistic activity.<sup>1</sup> Although so surprisingly little known, the Vākāṭaka dynasty, in the heyday of its power under the emperor Hariṣeṇa, had hardly a rival in the world in terms of either its political or its artistic achievements.

Such energy combined with such quality—evident as much in the site's sculpture and architecture as in its paintings—would itself qualify Ajaṇṭā's Vākāṭaka renaissance for greatness. The fact that, prior to this time, not one of Ajaṇṭā's excavators had ever faced a cliff before, for no such caves had been cut in India for three hundred years, only enhances the achievement. But Ajaṇṭā's aesthetic and technical virtues, like its remarkable—if fragile and imperfect—state of preservation, are the more significant because the flowering of the site under the Vākāṭakas came at the very height of India's Golden Age. Hariṣeṇa and his courtiers, and the skilled artists they hired, have thus provided us, even at this site far off from the capital, with a unique record of this classic epoch at the very moment of its fullest blossoming.

The entrance of the great emperor Hariṣeṇa onto the stage of Indian history for his all-too-brief hour, and the fate that befell both him and the empire that he had gathered, are part of the finally tragic story that Ajaṇṭā tells when we probe into it layer by layer. From the moment of the old site's reinvigoration by a consortium of the emperor's richest and most powerful courtiers until its traumatic ending, when some of these same founders were to be counted among the site's destroyers, the turbulence of Ajaṇṭā's development constantly leaves its revealing traces in the rock.

The various "levels" or "breaks" in the site's development (see table 1) that I explore below can all be explained as revealing stages in the history of Ajaṇṭā's patronage, either for the better or (more often) for the worse. Much of this history of the site will reflect the aggression of the Aśmakas, feudatory to the Vākāṭakas, who were ruling over the territory just to the south when Ajaṇṭā's renaissance began. Although the Aśmakas' Cave 26 complex was among the most ambitious of the new caves sponsored at the site, their relations with the local feudatory king of the Ajaṇṭā region (ancient Rishīka) had soured by ca. 468. At that point (our Level 1), surely because the aggressive Aśmakas were already threatening the region, the local king, who had previously indulged in a lavish

piety, must have started to face up to reality. Suddenly changing his priorities from spiritual to military, he ordered all work at the site halted, except for that on his own caves and upon the splendid Cave 1, the donation of his overlord, the emperor Hariṣeṇa. Thus begins what I call the "Recession"—a drastic halting of the site's patronage.

The Aśmaka threat to the site's security only increased, and in 471 (our Level 2) work was abruptly cut off, even on these privileged royal caves. During the brief Hiatus that followed—when, we can assume, Aśmaka was battling for control of the Rishīka region—no work was done whatsoever. Then, in 475 (our Level 3), when patronage activity reappeared, the Aśmakas had clearly assumed control of the area; significantly, work was now vigorously resumed on their own cave complex, while the caves of the local king were left unfinished and even (in the case of his sumptuous *chaitya* hall) quite intentionally abandoned.

Under this new Aśmaka control, the site quickly flourished again; but not for long. In 477 (our Level 4) the great Hariṣeṇa died—very suddenly, if I have read the evidence of his cave correctly. During the following year, the majority of the patrons at the site, as if in a state of shock, abandoned their overall excavation programs, rushing their images to completion in order to make such merit as they could. Only the monk Buddhahadra, with his close connections to the Aśmaka court, was able to continue his cave in a more or less normal way. But in 478 (our Level 5) all of the involvements of such original patrons ended completely. War, or the rumors of war, or the preparations for war now were choking the site off from its accustomed sources of support.

The next couple of years (479–80; what I call the "Period of Disruption") were years of frenzied and helter-skelter activity by all who could manage to add intrusive images in or upon or around the caves that the original elitist patrons had been so suddenly forced to abandon. Most of these eleventh-hour donors were the monks still living there, anxious to get the benefit of such donations while they could and using whatever artists had not yet fled the declining site in search of more likely work. Although there is good reason to believe that none of these intrusive donations postdates the year 480, a number of monks may have continued living in some of the caves for another decade or two.

But the world had surely changed. By the early 480s, the aggressive Aśmakas, not satisfied with having usurped the Ajaṇṭā region itself, took advantage of the ineptitude of Hariṣeṇa's ill-fated son and successor to foment a widespread insurrection against the



imperial house itself. Their success caused the total destruction of the Vākātakas. But because they themselves could not manage to hold the empire together, they also caused the dark age that so ominously shadowed their warlike path.

It was within that darkness, deprived of praise and nourishment, that Ajaṇṭā started its many centuries of stony sleep.

### *General Considerations*

Since Ajaṇṭā is a "dig," it should be possible to speak of an "archaeology of Ajaṇṭā." As is the case in most digs, Ajaṇṭā's Vākātaka development is quite discontinuous. As noted above, it breaks into a number of distinct levels or strata, reflecting the way that its patronage was affected by political, economic, and other factors. As we probe into each level—the eye rather than the shovel being our tool—we find directly comparable morphological, iconographic, and technological features spreading horizontally throughout the caves. That is, every cave or portion of a cave, every carved or painted image, at a given point in its development, will share certain distinctive features with its counterparts elsewhere at the site; when these features are sufficient in number and significance, we can properly postulate their contemporaneity and often that of their contexts as well.

But we must make a vertical as well as a horizontal site survey, studying the way each separate feature emerges, evolves, is changed, or vanishes over time. Finally, when we consider all of the features together, we should be able to define and describe a series of vertically ordered planes or "levels," each containing, as in an archaeological dig, the features belonging to that level of historical development. Then, using slightly elastic bands for our woof and fibers from the date-palm for our warp, we can weave the complex tapestry of the site's dramatic history. And though this history will still be mute, we can then go to the written record—the inscriptions and the narratives of these times—in order to bring our abstract developmental sequence to life and into the life of those times.

Because the excavations of the Vākātaka phase at Ajaṇṭā, Bāgh, Aurangabād (Caves 1, 3, and 4A), Dharaśiva, the Ghaṭotkacha *vihāra*, and Banaoti are so abundantly rich in forms and features, because the upper and lower limits are so close in time, and because of the many revealing connections with known historical events, the most practical and informative way to describe the development of the site, and to read its story, is year by year. Thus, I have

divided the Vākātaka developments at these cave sites into nineteen separate annual levels, starting in ca. A.D. 462 and ending in ca. A.D. 480. Admittedly, these divisions are arbitrary; but they are not *very* arbitrary. For reasons that I have explained at length elsewhere, neither the starting date nor the ending date can vary by more than a year or two.<sup>2</sup> And whereas the pace of developments within the sequence may vary slightly from what I have suggested, this variation too must be slight indeed.

This is not to suggest that such discrete probings can be done at other sites. Ajaṇṭā and its associated sites (fig. 2) are unique in this regard. They are, by all counts, the most minutely, as well as the most totally, analyzable sites in the world. And this fact is the more remarkable because Ajaṇṭā was created at such a crucial moment in India's cultural and political development. As a richly informative illustrated history, it both describes and explains that classic moment in India's past from which later generations in India and beyond continued to draw forms, ideas, and inspiration.

For our purposes here, however, I want to discuss not annual but rather event-determined levels, focusing upon the five very distinct points of rupture that can be found in the overall development of the site. Such ruptures of course occur at the *end* of each of these levels, just as in a "normal" dig; for it is there that the drastic temporal breaks occurred, leaving a spectrum of unfinished or just-finished forms and features embedded, as it were, in the stratum under investigation. Yet when we put what we have observed at the site together with what we know from written sources, a curious fact emerges: whereas these outer records are necessary to put Ajaṇṭā and the other Vākātaka sites into their general cultural context, it turns out that these records—long accused of being compounded of myth and exaggeration—are almost impossible to interpret, even to believe, until they have been tested against the undeniably solid evidence of the caves themselves. Thus, in the end the history of the times depends upon the evidence of the caves just as much as the history of the caves depends upon that of the times. Indeed, our understanding of the history of the times, which must be radically transformed by what the caves reveal, cannot be properly developed in any other way.

Needless to say, only a few shards from our dig can be shown here. There is no question of a report on all the features that one must consider, which could include a host of architectural, sculptural, painted, technological, and epigraphic factors. Instead I will concentrate solely on main shrine Buddhas, which are not only of general interest to us but were of

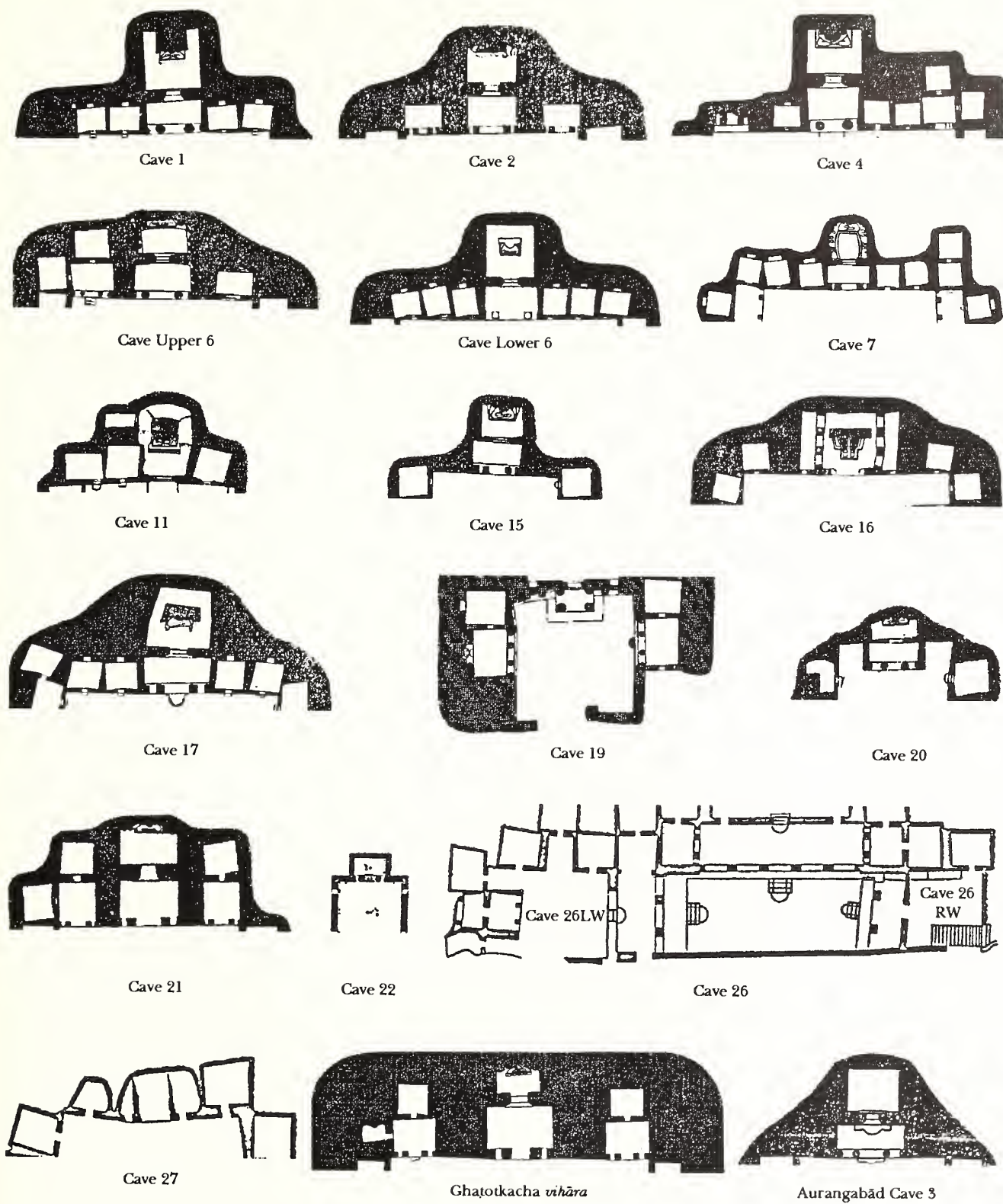


FIG. 2. Plans of shrines at Ajaṇṭā and some of its associated sites



overwhelming interest to the site's patrons. For this reason, work once started generally proceeded upon such images with no breaks at all, other than those caused by traumas over which the patrons had no control. By contrast, were we considering windows or doorways, upon which attention was not so compulsively focused, the "biography" of any given example might span much of the site's development, after one took into account the original conception, the roughing out, the proper shaping, the carved decoration, the plastering, the painting, the fitting, even certain reshapings and refittings. Furthermore—and this is most significant—when crises came, patrons were always concerned to finish the Buddha image, to the exclusion of almost everything else. Thus, a rush to complete these main Buddha images generally characterizes the "break point" of each level.

Considering how little we know about the biographies of most Buddha images in India and how seldom we can explain the problems affecting them, it is remarkable that of the seventeen main images finished at Ajañtā during the Vākātaka phase, all but five had to be rushed to completion at one or another of the different "break points" in the site's history.<sup>3</sup> Nor were the other five immune from pain. Two of them—indeed the most important of them all (in Caves 1 and 19)—were never used as intended.<sup>4</sup> Two others (in Caves 26 and 26 LW), like some of the other twelve, suffered unanticipated compositional and/or iconographic adjustments, even drastic revisions, when traumas disrupted their development.

Because they are products of precisely the same patronage, I shall also briefly mention the main Buddha in the Ghaṭotkacha *vihāra* (donated by the Vākātaka minister Varāhadeva, who also sponsored Cave 16) as well as the main Buddhas in Aurangabād Caves 3 and 4A, which, like the Cave 26 complex at Ajañtā, were probably donated by the Aśmakas. The Ghaṭotkacha Buddha, like so many of its Ajañtā counterparts, was rushed to completion in 478, whereas the Aurangabād Buddhas, being under Aśmaka sponsorship, were less hastily finished in that same year.

The single (not particularly impressive) image at Ajañtā that seems to have survived unscathed by the site's turbulent history is that in the left wing of Cave 26; but even that image enjoyed no more than a few months of what one might call decent worship.<sup>5</sup> Finally, although all of the seventeen images at Ajañtā that we shall discuss were invariably and even compulsively brought to completion, this was not true of a single one of the caves in which they were located, which extend out beyond the images with an even more poignant story to tell.

I will list here the various images that had either just

been hurriedly completed or (in a few cases) had just barely been completed in normal course when each level ended. I shall not of course be able to discuss all of the characteristic contextual materials that define each of these levels nor to report on the whole dig. Instead, in the interests of brevity, I shall ask the reader to refer to my previous articles for a more detailed discussion.<sup>6</sup>

The dates that I shall supply are from the neatly framed tapestry I spoke of before, but they should not be thought of as absolute. Because of the way the cloth was made, it can always be stretched a little or shrunk a little, with the spaces between the dates being somewhat reduced or expanded as a consequence. Or it can be stretched a little in one part of its composition and shrunk a little in another, for this will not affect the underlying sequential connections. Nor will it affect the remarkable fact that all of our break points happen to occur on December 31 of the year in question, just as each new level always begins on January 1.

### *Level 1: Early 462–Late 468*

*Buddhas of Caves Lower 6, 7, 11, 15 all rushed to completion; stūpas to contain Buddhas of Caves 19, 26 roughed out; no other images yet reached in course of excavation.*

The Ajañtā region was among the extensive feudatory domains inherited by the new Vākātaka emperor Hariṣeṇa when he succeeded to power in about A.D. 460. Having only recently defeated their old rivals, the Aśmakas, whose territories lay just to the south, Rishika was at peace, while under the authoritative rule of the new emperor, the great trade routes that passed through the region were open. Such factors surely influenced the chief minister of the empire, along with the obsessively pious local king and a number of other wealthy and powerful devotees, when they decided to reinaugurate patronage at the famous old monastic site in the spectacular ravine formed by the headwaters of the Waghora river. Within the first five or six years twenty-four major excavations were already underway.<sup>7</sup>

The most ambitious of these—the *chaitya* complex involving Cave 26 and its four wings—was sponsored by a Rajneesh-type monk named Buddhahadra, who had intimate links to the court of the powerful neighboring province, Aśmaka. Buddhahadra's power and wealth can be explained by the fact that he was the closest friend of the great minister of Aśmaka and had been so "throughout many previous existences," as his donative record proclaims.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the Cave



26 complex was being built in honor of this very official; and its importance (mirroring the importance of its patrons) is attested to not only by its size but by its particularly sacred function.

However, when the great central hall of Cave 26 had scarcely been roughed out and its *stūpa* barely revealed, work on it suddenly broke off.<sup>9</sup> Significantly, it is at this same developmental level that work broke off on nearly every cave then underway at the site.<sup>10</sup> This is clear from the forms being excavated at the time of the break (many of which can still be seen), for they are very different from those produced when work was resumed on most of these caves over half a

decade later.

At this moment, only four Buddha images were underway in the site's *vihāras*, and all display certain significant early characteristics not to be seen again in the images that were later developed at the site.<sup>11</sup> All of these images were apparently intended to be located in the center of the shrine chamber. Quite possibly the earliest conception of all is that of Cave 11 (fig. 3), where the seated Buddha is backed by (or revealed from) a *stūpa*, suggesting that the first image type conceived for a *vihāra* at the site was directly derived from the types being created in the site's new *chaitya* halls, Caves 19 and 26, at this very time. Since the



FIG. 3. Main Buddha, Cave 11. Begun 466, completed 468, revised later in 468. AAAUM 412/69.





FIG. 4. Main Buddha,  
Cave Lower 6.  
Begun 467, completed 468.  
AAAUM 41/68.

earliest Vākāṭaka *vihāras* at the site, as originally planned, had no shrines or images whatsoever, the assumption that the *chaitya* hall image was the source for that in the *vihāras* seems very compelling. However, as Cave 11 itself shows, the focus in these *vihāras* turned out to be on the image alone rather than on the *stūpa* or any ritual involving its circumambulation. Had there been any serious interest in the *stūpa* in Cave 11, the floor around it would certainly have been finished rather than left completely rough, not only in 468 but for the whole next decade.

In Cave Lower 6, the contemporaneous image (fig. 4) is already free of any link with a *stūpa*, although the large size of the halo, characteristic of all these first four images, can perhaps be explained as a vestigial connection: in Cave 11 it traces the outline of the attached *stūpa*'s dome. The Buddha images in both Cave 15 and Cave 7 (figs. 5–6) were presumably originally intended to be centered in the shrine—a convention that continued even into the 470s in Cave 17 and in the original plan for Cave 1; but in the rush of the moment this was never done. Indeed, they were finished most expediently, if they were finished at all (fig. 7). The fact that both were redesigned and refurbished a decade later—the time to which both their throne backs and the throne base of Cave 15 belong—could well suggest that they remained unpainted and undedicated at this early stage in their varied careers. As we might expect, their shrine doorways had not been hung at this time.



FIG. 5. Main Buddha, Cave 15. Begun 468, completed 468,  
revised 477–78. AAAUM 1569/73.





FIG. 6. Main Buddha, Cave 7. Begun 468, completed 468, revised 477-79. AAAUM 1446/73.



FIG. 7. Sketch showing Cave 7 image in 468.



What distinguishes these images from later ones is the absence, in all four, of attendant bodhisattvas, as well as a characteristically early throne base, in which lions appear under (but not—as later—supporting) the throne and deer flank a simple wheel. Also, the halo is much larger than it is in a typically late image, and, where it shows (as in Caves Lower 6 and 11), the throne back is far simpler than later on; for instance, no dwarves frolic, at this early date, on or under the *vyalas*. And all of these images are of course unfinished, or barely finished, for time so quickly ran out; even in Cave Lower 6, the only one of the four where the shrine was plastered and painted at this point, clear evidence indicates that there was no time to spare. This is probably why the rear half of the simply painted ceiling and the shrine's rear wall were never painted, even though they were fully plastered; and it surely explains why the decoration of the left wall was never finished.<sup>12</sup>

I have called this break the "Recession" of 468. In its effect on the site, it was not a total and traumatic break, for work still continued both on the splendid cave complex (Caves 17–20) of the local king and on the sumptuous Cave 1, which the emperor Hariṣeṇa himself had only recently started. Furthermore, as the evidence of the images in Caves L6, 7, 11, and 15

proves, there was clearly time—even if only a few months—for those patrons to bring their images, quite expediently, to or at least toward completion. It does, however, appear to be the case that where the shrine areas had not even been reached in the course of excavation, the patrons were discouraged or perhaps even forbidden from making similar efforts. The only exception involved the Vākātaka's chief minister himself, who was—not surprisingly—largely exempt from the sumptuary cutbacks that afflicted lesser figures and so was able to continue the overall course of work on his Cave 16 during this critical period. But even in this powerful minister's cave, the careful carving and painting of the previous years now gave way, during 468, to efforts that show every sign of haste.<sup>13</sup> In any case, it finally all came to naught; for although the craftsmen had penetrated the shrine antechamber before they were laid off, the intended image still lay behind some twelve feet of solid rock when work was given up. As for the cave's program of painted decoration, it was barely half completed at this time.

Apparently, a serious but not yet desperate political or economic problem led to these cutbacks, which had certainly not been anticipated even a year earlier when the site was still expanding so exuberantly. At



FIG. 8. Main Buddha, Cave 20. Begun 470, completed 471. AAAUM 15,118.



this point in our excavations we can have no valid clue as to the cause of this Recession. In fact, we have two more levels to go, and a drastic abandonment of all activity in between, before an explanation of what was happening will emerge.

### *Level 2: Early 469–Late 471*

*Buddha images in Caves 17 and 20 rushed to completion; Buddha image in Cave 19 finished but not significantly used; Buddha image in Cave 1 left merely blocked out.*

It is of course significant that, in the second level, work at the site continued only on the benefactions of Upendragupta, the local king, and of his overlord Hariṣeṇa, whose Cave 1 progressed with great care and creativity during this period. It is clear that the very best of the workmen had been selected to work on this impressive excavation and on Upendragupta's equally superb Cave 17–20 complex. Many of those not so chosen probably went north to ancient Anupa at this point, hoping to find work on the new Vākāṭaka caves at Bāgh—a site that may have been recently begun because, from 468 onward, so many unemployed and already experienced excavators were

suddenly available. At least this is what its many forms and features suggest.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, with one of Hariṣeṇa's sons as the viceroy at nearby Māhiṣmatī, it was under direct Vākāṭaka control and apparently exempt from whatever problems were afflicting Rishīka at this time.

The emperor Hariṣeṇa's Cave 1 progressed with an unhurried authority during this period; but despite the splendid quality of the work that is generally maintained throughout his feudatory's similarly "privileged" cave complex, it is clear that Upendragupta's pious goals—enthusiastically announced in his Cave 17 inscription as "filling the whole world with *stūpas* and *vihāras*"—now had to suffer certain practical limitations. Especially in the beautiful little Cave 20, drastic cutbacks were now ordered, for dark clouds were gathering on the horizon. The two rear cells were omitted even after matrix had been reserved for their elaborate door frames, the shrine was redesigned to save time in its excavation, numerous half-finished or half-started motifs were masked with mud plaster, and expediency rather than aesthetics became more and more the rule. Finally, in desperation, the beautiful Cave 20 image (figs. 8–9), not quite yet fully carved, was finished off with mud, while its fine shrine doorway was hastily plastered and painted



FIG. 9. Main Buddha, Cave 20, view rt. Begun 470, completed 471. Huntington R371/18.





FIG. 10. Main Buddha, Cave 17. Begun 469, completed 471.  
AAAUM 512/77.

even though still far from fully carved. Outside, on the left porch pilaster, a brief record of the king's donation was all too hurriedly recorded.<sup>15</sup> In Cave 17, the long dedicatory encomium, which by good fortune had already been composed and sent down from the capital, did indeed get applied, but a number of significant features in the cave were never finished.<sup>16</sup> Most significantly, although the Buddha image itself was successfully completed (fig. 10), the shrine walls were only plastered but never painted. Just as in the closely related Cave 20, where the same thing happened, it is clear that time ran out.

Similar problems afflicted Upendragupta's Cave 19, the beautiful *chaitya* hall, which, in better days, had been intended as the ceremonial center for the whole site. Here the wide panel prepared for the inscription remains poignantly empty,<sup>17</sup> while the paintings inside the cave remain suspiciously clean; there is not a trace of the grime that darkens the painted surfaces in caves used constantly for even a year or two. Although it is evident that the image was

finished without a problem (fig. 11), there are other indications too that work broke off on the cave, and that it was in fact abandoned, before it had even been used in any consistent way for worship. The fact that a number of the expected symmetrically placed garland hooks were never put in place suggests that the interior was never properly fitted out.<sup>18</sup> In the courtyard the *yaksha* (or *yakshī*), intended to mirror the famous *nāgarāja* on the other (west) side, was never placed in the panel planned for it; such an inauspicious omission further shows how quickly time ran out when Upendragupta was losing his control of the region—a conclusion confirmed by a number of lesser unfinished details in the court.

### *Hiatus: Early 472–Late 474*

*No patronage activity whatsoever, either productive or destructive, at the site during this period. Many craftsmen find employment at Bāgh. Strict administrative control of site continues.*

The evidence for a total interruption of patronage activity, or Hiatus, at Ajantā is very clear, even though the span of time assigned to it is necessarily a guess. It cannot have lasted very long if, as I believe, the main phase of patronage at the site, which must include the Hiatus, lasted only some seventeen years (462 through 478). On the other hand, some events that occurred during the Hiatus seem to require it to have occupied a year or two at the very least.

The most significant event connected with the Hiatus—in fact the event that caused the Hiatus—was the conquest of the region by the aggressive Aśmakas. In 475, work was vigorously renewed on the Cave 26 complex, which was being built in honor of the minister of Aśmaka, but nothing more was done on the splendid central Cave 17–21 complex, which had been sponsored by Upendragupta, the local king. We should of course say the *former* local king, for by 475 he was clearly no longer a presence at the site. Perhaps, like another Justinian, he had been too pious for his kingdom's good, "having expended abundant (wealth)" on sacred monuments but all too little on his arsenals.<sup>19</sup>

Not surprisingly, now that the Aśmakas were in control, Upendragupta's beautiful *chaitya* hall was never put into use. Indeed, it appears that the new rulers specifically disallowed all worship there, just as they never allowed any more work to be done on Upendragupta's Caves 17 and 20, even though for purely practical reasons Cave 17 continued in use; for it could house forty monks and was one of the few



caves available for occupancy (and indeed already occupied) when the Aśmakas took over the site.<sup>20</sup> But as for the cells attached to Upendragupta's *chaitya* hall, the Aśmakas brutally cut a passageway right through them to create a more convenient approach to their own Cave 26 complex, which lay beyond.

Indeed, the Aśmakas may have gone further than this. It appears that they even banned the use of the standing Buddha with both arms raised, which Upendragupta had selected as the site's focal image. Perhaps the Aśmakas felt that this hieratic image type was too closely identified with their old rival's power. In any case, after having appeared frequently on doorways in Upendragupta's caves in the early 470s, just before the Hiatus, this particular image never appeared again until 479, when the Aśmakas had given

up their authority over the site.<sup>21</sup> Then it returned assertively, as if released from bondage.

All such evidence finally clarifies what came before. It explains the regional political and economic problems that caused the Recession of 468, for it seems clear (given the hindsight available after the Hiatus) that the dark clouds of Aśmaka aggression, which would ultimately spread so disastrously over the whole of central India, were already gathering over the Ajaṇṭā region at that time. And it explains the surprising cutbacks in Upendragupta's lavish patronage—particularly in Cave 20—as the reality of war began to loom. It even explains Upendragupta's touchingly talismanic boast, made in the Cave 17 inscription just when the Aśmaka aggressors were beating down the door, that when he and his brother were ruling



FIG. 11. Main Buddha, Cave 19. Begun 467, completed 470. AAAUM 143/68.



TABLE 2. Introduction of Various Buddha Features at Ajañtā and Related Sites  
(Images with listed features were carved no earlier than date indicated)

	2 21 7† U6 15† 26 22 26RW 26LW all intrusive images												
images carved at approximately these dates:	L6	11 7* 15*	469	17 17	20 1*	Hiatus	475	1† 4	16	Aur3	Aur4A	479	480
Buddha: <i>Padmāsana</i>	•									•			
Buddha: <i>Pralambapādāsana</i>	•												
Buddha placed in center of shrine	•												
Buddha attached to rear wall of shrine		•											
Buddha: unusually large halo	•												
Buddha: smaller (usual size) halo				•									
Buddha: hands proper right in <i>abhāya mudrā</i>		•											
Buddha: hands in <i>dharmacakra mudrā</i>	•												
Base with lions but no throne legs	•												
Base with throne legs but no lions				•									
Base with devotees; no throne legs and no lions							•						
Base with lion throne legs; with/without devotees									•				
Base with dwarf throne legs instead of lion legs										•			
Wheel plain (with decorated hubs)	•												
Wheel festooned (e.g., Cave 1)							•						
Wheel garlanded (e.g., Cave U6)										•			
Wheel absent ( <i>pralambapādāsana</i> )									•				
<i>Nāgas</i> at base ( <i>pralambapādāsana</i> )									•				
Wheel present ( <i>pralambapādāsana</i> )										•			
Wheel fused with lotus shaft										•			
Wheel raised on lotus shaft												•	
Base with nubs at corners ( <i>pralambapādāsana</i> )									•				
Base with nubs at corners ( <i>padmāsana</i> )										•			
Base shows small robe end on seat cushion	•									•			
Base with arcing cloth over front ( <i>padmāsana</i> )										•			
Base with scalloped cloth over front ( <i>padmāsana</i> )										•			
<i>Makara</i> : empty mouth	•												
<i>Makara</i> : dwarf emerging from mouth				•									
<i>Makara</i> : rests paws on throne arm									•				
<i>Makara</i> : frond or bird's head from mouth									•				
<i>Makara</i> : dwarves as well as the latter									•				
Seated figure over <i>makara</i>	•												
No figure over <i>makara</i>		•											
Running or soaring figure(s) over <i>makara</i>									•				
Multiple figures over <i>makara</i> ; dancing, etc.												•	
<i>Vyāla</i> : omitted				•									
<i>Vyāla</i> with no dwarf attendants	•												
<i>Vyāla</i> with one dwarf on or under								•					
<i>Vyāla</i> with two or more dwarves on or under									•				
<i>Vyāla</i> with beads from paws as well as snout										•			
Pillared throne back									•				
Pilasters frame Buddha panel													•
Flying dwarves above image		•											
Flying couples above image										•			
Both flying couples and dwarves above image									•				
Bodhisattva attendants				•									
Standing Buddhas as attendants												•	
Attendants on lotus pedestals										•			
Attendants with halo								•					
<i>Avalokiteśvara</i> with long-stemmed lotus								•					
Attendants on long-stemmed lotus pedestals										•			

\* first phase of work on image

† second phase of work on image

happily together some years before, they had “subjugated prosperous countries such as Aśmaka.”<sup>22</sup>

Evidence that the Hiatus was a distinct interval separating the period of Rishīka control from that of Aśmaka control can be seen in the decisive replacement of older (and suddenly outmoded) forms by new and better ones. Thus, in Cave 1, the burdensome double stone projections used for cell doorway fittings from 470 until the time of the Hiatus were expediently cut away when the sensible new recessed mode appeared in 475, right after the Hiatus. (Fortunately, the cutting away of the old forms, which were in low-priority locations, was less than thorough, so the telling evidence remains.)<sup>23</sup> Evidently, the new fitting mode, along with the thickening of the walls in which the doors appear, had been developed at Bāgh, where the sandstone is so friable that projecting fittings were not practical. At the same time new window and doorway formats and a number of decorative elements were similarly “imported” at the very beginning of this second “heyday,” which started in 475 with the Aśmaka conquest; most of these too appear to have come down from Bāgh, where the very softness of the stone probably encouraged such elaborations.

Finally, between the time that work on Level 2



FIG. 12. Main Buddha, Cave 1. Begun 471, continued 475–77. AAAUM 11/68.

broke off in 471 and started up again on Level 3 in 475, distinct changes were made in the format of certain images or elements, which would suggest a break in time long enough for such ideas to reach the site or to be developed there. The placement of the Cave 1 Buddha (fig. 12) is a case in point. Modeled, by and large, on the Cave 17 image (fig. 10), with a central placement planned, it had apparently been roughed out by the time of the Hiatus to the extent that deep cuts had been made along either side. Then, when work on the image was taken up again after the Hiatus and a central placement for such images was no longer desired, these preexisting cuts were converted into (necessarily pointless) “corridors.”

Not a single image of any type whatsoever was added to any of the caves at the site during the Hiatus.<sup>24</sup> This does not so much suggest the site’s abandonment during this period—except of course by the craftsmen, who could find no work there—as it does its continued occupation and the preservation of the insistent exclusiveness that had characterized the site’s patronage from the start. How strong and how effective the administrative control was during this troubled time becomes clear when we contrast it to the total anarchy that reigned during the Period of Disruption, when the major patrons had lost their rights and privileges and anyone could put any image almost anywhere.

Thus, monks continued living at the site in this fallow period, and worship must have continued too, to the degree possible in caves so generally incomplete. The fact of a strong administrative control over the site of course explains the generally orderly way in which it grew and may also explain, at least in part, the remarkably consistent changes in iconography (as opposed to style) which, in the case of Buddha images, can be followed at Ajantha almost year by year (see table 2).

### *Level 3: Early 475–Late 477*

*Emperor’s Cave 1 Buddha image finished but never dedicated or used. Work programs, which were reactivated in nearly all of the abandoned caves and initiated in some new ones starting in 475, are suddenly given up at the end of 477, in all caves except the Cave 26 complex. Immediately thereafter (in our Level 4) attention is turned exclusively to the hurried completion of the main images and their immediate contexts.*

After the Hiatus, work started up very vigorously, as we might expect, on the Aśmakas’ long-abandoned *chaitya* Cave 26 complex, as well as on various other major undertakings, including the emperor’s Cave 1.



Only Caves 17–20, the donations of the defeated local king, remained totally untouched by further excavation or decoration. The renewal of work on certain lesser caves was somewhat delayed, almost certainly because at the very start of this new phase there would have been more work programs than workmen to work on them.

Nonetheless, despite such practical problems, everything went on exuberantly now. By the end of 477, when Level 3 concluded with the sudden death of the great emperor Hariṣeṇa, no fewer than twenty-five caves were simultaneously underway. Ten of these (excluding Cave 1, whose image had just been completed) had images then underway or (in the case of Cave 26's right wing) about to be. These are Caves 2 (fig. 21), 4 (fig. 22), U6 (fig. 24), 7 (fig. 6), 15 (fig. 5), 16 (fig. 18), 21 (fig. 23), 26 (fig. 17), 26RW (fig. 13), 26LW (fig. 26). One could also include the images in the *vihāra* at Ghaṭotkacha and in Aurangabād Cave 3 and 4A (figs. 14–16).

But then Hariṣeṇa died; and a shock wave surged through the site. We are told by Daṇḍin, in the *Daśakumāracarita*, that the death of the great Vākātaka king brought on a time of great strife and presaged the fall of the empire, but the best evidence bearing upon his death—and perhaps even the manner of it—is

embedded in the site itself. First of all the sumptuous Cave 1 (which I have argued elsewhere was Hariṣeṇa's own donation) was never completed.<sup>25</sup> The image had just been finished, and the rest of the cave was moving nicely toward completion—there was hardly two weeks' more work to do, and that on the murals alone—when everything abruptly stopped. Several factors suggest that the cave was neither used nor dedicated: it was not inscribed—at least no inscription is extant; the image shows not the slightest trace of smoky grime; and garlands were never hung from the hook provided in the shrine antechamber's ceiling medallion. Similarly, in the Period of Disruption, when new donors were scattering votive images throughout all of the caves that had been surely dedicated, *no* such intrusions were put in the splendid Cave 1. Apparently, then, the image was peremptorily abandoned before being brought to life.<sup>26</sup>

Hariṣeṇa's death was surely sudden. It may have been from a heart attack or a stroke, or (considering the perverse machinations of the Aśmakas) it may have been by poison or the knife.<sup>27</sup> But it was certainly not a wasting illness. It is inconceivable that, having sponsored the finest *vihāra* in the whole of India and standing to gain much glory from its completion and dedication, the emperor would not have ordered it



FIG. 13. Main Buddha, Cave 26 Right Wing. Begun 478, completed 478. AAAUM WG/14.





FIG. 14. Main Buddha, Ghaṭotkacha *viḥāra*.  
Begun 476, completed 478. AIIS, Benares 694/55.



FIG. 15. Main Buddha, Aurangabād 3.  
Begun 477, completed 478. AAAUM WC/28.

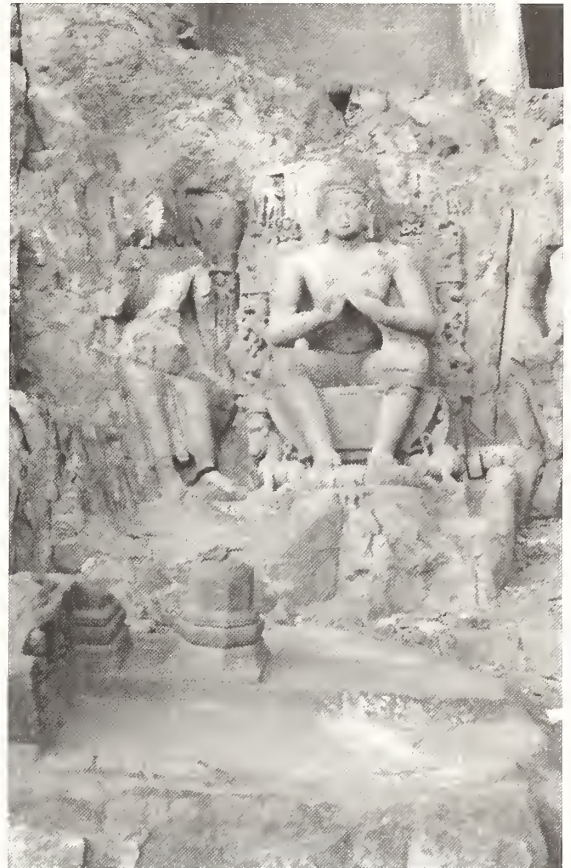


FIG. 16. Main Buddha, Aurangabād 4A.  
Begun 478, completed 478 (intrusions added 479–80).  
Reproduced from AAAUM slide.



finished if he had known that his death was imminent.

If the situation in Hariṣeṇa's own cave appears to support his sudden death, the situation throughout the site does so even more dramatically. Suddenly, at the very moment—the specific “archaeological level”—that work breaks off in Cave 1, work is drastically affected in every other ongoing excavation program throughout the site, except, significantly, in the Aśmakas' Cave 26 complex. In all of these other caves consistent excavation work is now halted completely, all attention being anxiously directed to the

suddenly crucial task of completing and dedicating each cave's main image—often in a most expedient manner. Thus, with respect only to images, the break in our Level 3 involves the Cave 1 image alone, and then only at the point when it was just about to be dedicated and put into use. But, importantly, this break precipitates a pervasive work cutback throughout the site (again with the exception of the Cave 26 complex), in which work shifts anxiously to the main Buddha images alone. We shall meet these images again, scarcely a few months hence, when the time allotted them has run out, at the end of our Level 4.



FIG. 17. Main Buddha, Cave 26. Begun 477, completed 477. AAAUM 1011/68.



Other than those that were rushed to completion in 468 or 471, the only image that may well have been fully carved (and quite possibly painted) by the time of Hariṣeṇa's death in 477 was the main image in Cave 26 (fig. 17), the *chaitya* cave that was now surely intended to replace Upendragupta's rival Cave 19 as the ceremonial center for the site. It has a complex history, for its *stūpa* had already been roughed out when work on the cave broke off a decade earlier at the time of the Recession. At that time it may well have been intended to contain a standing image, like that in Cave 19 (fig. 11), for the connections between the

two regions were apparently friendly when the site was inaugurated. It surely was *not* intended to contain its present image, a newfangled type that was never carved at the site prior to its similarly late (ca. 477) appearance in this cave, on the one hand, and in the donation of the Vākāṭaka's chief minister, Cave 16 (fig. 18), on the other. Consequently, this new *pralambapādāsana* image does not properly fit the space allotted to it. The now-necessary bodhisattvas had to be relegated to the wings (they can be found in miniature just beyond the frame, on the *stūpa* drum), whereas in the related panels carved during



FIG. 18. Main Buddha, Cave 16. Begun 477, completed 478. AAAUM 1100/66.





FIG. 19. Buddhas (intrusive), Cave 26, ambulatory. Largest Buddha (right) late 479, *Padmāsana* Buddha (below) early 479, Buddha panels (above) 480, *Parinirvāṇa* (left) 478. AAAUM 1203/78.

the following year in the ambulatory (figs. 19–20), where there are no such constraints, they are included comfortably, as are the kneeling devotees below. In the central *stūpa*, it was apparently not considered appropriate to cut the figures of these now-conventional devotees into the structural base of the *stūpa*. Consequently the devotees at the left are carved from matrix that had happily remained on the floor—though a bit too far back—from the time of the cave’s abandonment in 468, while the group at the right had to be carved separately and then plugged into the floor. But at least the righthand group could be placed as far forward as desired, and they were probably a bit larger, too, than their constrained counterparts.<sup>28</sup>

#### *Level 4: Early 478–Late 478*

Main Buddha images in Caves 2, 4, 15 (Phase 2), 16, 21, and *Ghaṭotkacha* viḥāra rushed to completion. Buddha images of Cave 26LW, Cave 26RW, Aurangabād 3, and Aurangabād 4A completed in normal course, along with further work on the Cave 26 complex, which also breaks off abruptly at the end of this level. Buddha images of Cave U6, 7 (Phase 2), and 22, not completed and dedicated in time, will be completed in the Period of Disruption (479–80) but no longer in accord with their patrons’ original intentions.

The shock waves that ran through the site at the word of Hariṣeṇa’s death could only have been exacerbated by a knowledge of the incompetence of his son and successor Sarvasena III. What followed was a



FIG. 20. Buddhas (intrusive), Cave 26, ambulatory. Panels unfinished when work broke off in 480. AAAUM 1183/78.





FIG. 21. Main Buddha, Cave 2. Begun 476, completed 478. AAAUM 15,100.

drastic halt in nearly all of the ongoing work programs at the site. The only exceptions were the “Aśmaka” Cave 26 complex and the recently started caves at Aurangabād, which lay close to the center of Aśmaka power and were almost certainly supported by them as well.<sup>29</sup> Where they could (as in Caves 2, 7 and 21), the patrons at Ajanṭā tried to continue with the painting programs, but this was done most expediently; in general, they concentrated on the main Buddha images alone, and their very immediate contexts.<sup>30</sup>

In Cave 2, the main image (fig. 21) was hurriedly completed in 478, along with the total decoration of the shrine. By contrast, the shrine antechamber walls, which were already plastered and in normal course would have been painted prior to those of the shrine, were not touched at this point; all of the many Buddha images that cover it are new donations, made in the Period of Disruption. In Cave 4, the colossal image (fig. 22) was quickly plastered and painted, then very hastily and informally inscribed, even though the shrine as a whole was still in the course of excavation. Two of the six great standing Buddhas—those flanking the shrine doorway—were also rushed to completion at this time, but the other four had to be abandoned. In Cave 15, the old image, which had been left half carved in 468, was now hurriedly finished (fig. 5), and a certain amount of expedient



FIG. 22. Main Buddha, Cave 4. Begun 475, completed 478. AAAUM 78/78.



painting was done in the shrine and shrine antechamber, even though time ran out before the shrine door could be hung. In Cave 16, the very new and up-to-date *pralambapādāsana* image (fig. 18) was fully completed, but its context—the splendid pavilion in which it is now placed—was left totally unplastered and unpainted, even though the cave's rear wall (but not the ceiling, which in normal course would have been done first) was hastily decorated with contextually related paintings. In Cave 21, the Buddha image (fig. 23) was rushed to completion even before its hair curls and its conventional throne back motifs and attendant figures had been fully defined, suggesting the haste that was necessary.

In Cave Upper 6, the image (fig. 24) was fully carved, and a good start was made on the large standing Buddhas that were to attend it in the shrine antechamber. But the image was plastered

and painted, along with those in the shrine antechamber, only in the Period of Disruption; for time ran out all too fast. Indeed, this was also the case in Cave 7, where the old image was updated starting in 477 (fig. 6) but was only finished after the site's constraints had been broken and new donors had started adding their own images to the cave. Cave 22 provides a somewhat similar example: the original donor, having already renounced his original excavation program by cutting his main image (fig. 25) in the rear wall of the half-completed shrine antechamber, finally had to share that area with other donors in order to get his image completed at all.<sup>91</sup>

By way of contrast, the images in the Cave 26 complex were completed without incident, reflecting no such anxieties. As we have seen, the image in the main *stūpa* (fig. 17) had already been completed, perhaps even before 478; in that same year, the Cave



FIG. 23. Main Buddha, Cave 21. Begun 477, completed 478. AAAUM 1389/73.





FIG. 24. Main Buddha, Cave Upper 6. Begun 477, completed 479. AAAUM 1121/76.



FIG. 25. Main Buddha, Cave 22. Begun 478, completed 479. AAAUM 15131.



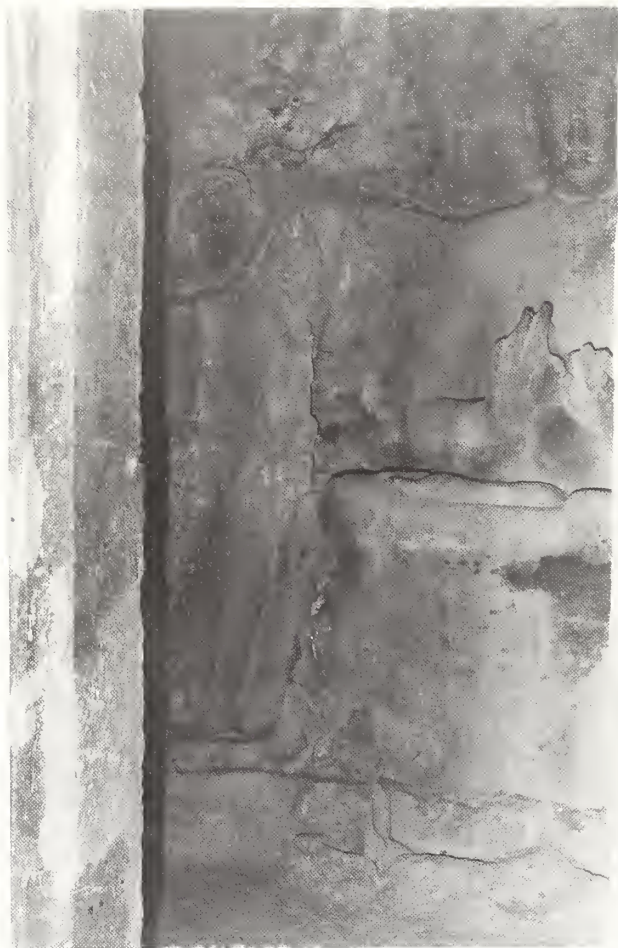


FIG. 26. Main Buddha, Cave 26 Left Wing. Begun 477, completed 478. AAAUM SA/29.

26LW Buddha (fig. 26), which had already been laid out a year earlier, was brought to completion, as was the similarly complex “late” image in Cave 26RW (fig. 13). As we would expect, these Buddha groups include motifs that are characteristic of this very late level throughout the site. Meanwhile, in the old—and old-fashioned—Cave 27, plans were underway to create a new Buddha image in a newly added shrine (fig. 27), which, just as in Cave 16, incorporates previously cut areas into a new design. However, this was never finished; seemingly, work broke off very suddenly, for there was no apparent rush to complete it.

Cave 26 developed quite similarly. During 478, when the rest of the site was in such a frenzy of “finishing-up” activity, the monk Buddhahadra, patron of the cave, was continuing to develop his whole cave complex, not only by adding the above-mentioned shrine to Cave 27 but by refurbishing the equally early Cave 25 and by starting the decoration of Cave 26’s ambulatory, where he ordered the carving

of the “Śrāvastī Miracle” scenes, along with a handsome “Eight Buddha” sequence, another Śrāvastī Miracle scene at a point in the apse where the light was good, the splendid Temptation by Māra, and the hugely moving Mahāparinirvāṇa. The latter is especially interesting. First of all, it was demonstrably the donation of Buddhahadra: the plastering of the adjacent aisle ceiling, clearly part of the original patron’s programmed work rather than something from the Period of Disruption, obviously occurred after the Parinirvāṇa scene was cut, for the ceiling’s plaster extends into the recess made by the panel. Equally significant, the Parinirvāṇa scene is unfinished, as indicated by the presence of unpainted sanguine sketches on the plastered background. That is, we can say that work ended on the cave at precisely that poignant moment when the Buddha was in the process of expiring.<sup>32</sup>

The telling point is this: Buddhahadra’s own patronage—that is to say, the connection of the Aśmakas with the site—was cut off all of a sudden, in the midst of work that could surely have been completed in a few days’ time at most. And the evidence is not merely to be found in the dying Buddha, for the excavation of the shrine in the associated Cave 27 was cut off very suddenly too; had there been but a few weeks’ grace, it too would surely have been completed.

How do we explain this suddenly changed situation: that the Cave 26 complex, which had been spared the severe stresses that affected all of the other caves at the site during the year after Hariṣeṇa’s death and which had been developing in a consistent way during that difficult year, suddenly was afflicted too? Indeed, work in the Cave 26 complex appears to have stopped even more abruptly than in any of those other caves where the Buddha images were being finished up during this anxious year. Only Buddhahadra’s donative inscription suggests an explanation. Although the ruler of Aśmaka, like the now-defeated Upendragupta of Rishika, had been one of Hariṣeṇa’s feudatories, the Cave 26 inscription, while celebrating the Aśmaka rulers, makes not even a ritual mention of the Vākātaka overlordship.<sup>33</sup> The great house is denied its old honors completely, just as, in this same era of decline, the formerly transcendent Guptas were put down by their increasingly independent feudatories.<sup>34</sup>

Buddhahadra’s startling omission, so clearly an insult to the central imperial power, surely reflects the Aśmakas’ sudden assertion of independence, which must have been proclaimed just after the various main Buddha images at Ajanṭā (including that of the Vākātaka’s chief minister) had been rapidly completed—that is, not long after the weak new emperor had replaced his powerful father upon the throne.

The *Daśakumāracarita* tells us that once Hariṣeṇa's successor was on the throne, the son of the great minister of Aśmaka—the very person in whose honor the Cave 26 complex was to be dedicated—had gone to the central Vākāṭaka court to corrupt the heir apparent and insidiously prepare the way for the dynasty's destruction.<sup>35</sup> And the *Daśakumāracarita* further states that, by instigating a large coalition of the Vākāṭaka's feudatories to rise up against the new Vākāṭaka emperor, the perniciously assertive Aśmakas were ultimately responsible for the destruction of the great and ancient Vākāṭaka house.<sup>36</sup>

Thus, the hasty completion of the main Buddha images in Caves 2, 4, U6, 7, 15, 16, 21, and 22 at Ajaṇṭā, and the Ghaṭotkacha *vihāra*, immediately reflects the patrons' awareness of the Aśmakas' aggressive intents, as well as the new emperor's weaknesses. And the now even more suddenly suspended work in the more "privileged" Cave 26 complex and in the related "Aśmaka" caves at Aurangabād records the crisis caused by the actual fruition of those aggressive intents—evidenced in Aśmaka's sudden declaration of its independence, which Buddhahadra's inscription so immediately reflects. With things of the spirit now being urgently replaced by the needs of war, it is no wonder that work on the Aśmakas' huge cave complex stopped at the very moment that their less pious plans were made known; and one can only assume that in this atmosphere of aggression, expansion, and insurrection, most of the other

patrons had already rushed their Buddha images to completion and given up on the future some weeks or months before.

Admittedly, the sobering endings of the once exuberant programs of work at the Vākāṭaka sites do not mean that the central Vākāṭaka house had yet been overthrown. That sad conclusion was yet to come. But it does mean that the die had been cast. The next years were to be years of pain, for the whole of central India was ultimately caught up in the great insurrection that the Aśmakas were fomenting. In such an environment, Ajaṇṭā could by no means go on as before, for its prestigious patrons were the very people who would be most immediately affected by the developing crisis.

### *Level 5: Early 479–Late 480*

*All consistent work has already stopped on all caves. Intrusive images are now carved or painted in all caves already dedicated. Finally, by the end of 480, all such "disruptive" patronage ends completely.*

Starting in 479, no further progress at all is made on the original programs of work in the caves, even on those of the locally ruling Aśmakas. Instead, for the first time, anyone could put anything anywhere, although in practice, the helter-skelter imagery of this period was added only to caves that had already been



FIG. 27. Cave 27, new shrine area (replacing cells). Begun 478. AAAUM 49/78.





FIG. 28. Buddha (intrusive), Cave Upper 6. In shrinelet at right end of front aisle. 479, utilizing earlier cell. AAAUM 70/68.

dedicated (figs. 19–20, 28–29) or where (as in Caves Upper 6, 7, and 22) the central image was already on its way to completion when the site's original phase of patronage ended (fig. 28). Not surprisingly, some of the first of these intrusive images were placed on any available spaces on the facades of the two great *chaitya*

halls, Caves 26 and 19, but they rapidly occupied other spaces too, including available locations inside the old Hīnayāna caves. Significantly, the vast majority of these new dedications, often hastily inscribed with the brush, were made by the monks still resident at the site, who may well have got the diminishing group of painters or sculptors at the site to make these images for them in return either for prayers or for a pittance. Whether or not this was true, we can certainly say that the economic base for the site had collapsed completely. And with the trade routes rapidly becoming unsafe for travel, there was little hope that it would be restored in the foreseeable future. Indeed, what the foreseeable future offered as a prospect was only darkness. The complete and sudden abandonment of the site's artistic patronage in 480—witnessed by the host of half-completed contemporaneous images—stands as evidence of that expectation.<sup>37</sup>

The *Daśakumāracarita* says that when the king of Aśmaka maneuvered a great coalition of feudatories into rising up against the weak successor of the great Hariṣeṇa and destroying him, he then, “for the sake of spoils roused a quarrel among the chieftains and . . . swallowed all that was theirs.”<sup>38</sup> But it was impossible for him to hold his great prize together. Hariṣeṇa's vast imperium, which by the mid-470s had stretched from sea to sea, shattered into its component parts. By the 480s and 490s, as we know from inscriptional evidence, the old Vākāṭaka domain was in the hands of its former feudatories and others; the proud empire, which had so exuberantly and so briefly held aloft, for a final moment, the *pūrṇaḥaṭa* of this great age in India, was never to be heard from again.<sup>39</sup>



FIG. 29. Buddha (intrusive), Cave 4. Porch, rear wall, left of doorway. Late 479. AAAUM 861/68.

## Notes

This article is based on a paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Association for Asian Studies, Chicago, 1990.

1. The most thorough justification of this dating is in W. Spink, "The Vākāṭaka's Flowering and Fall," a paper presented at The Age of the Vākāṭakas Seminar, Nagpur, 1985; now published in R. Parimoo et al., *The Art of Ajaṇṭā* (New Delhi: Vedam's Books International, 1991).
2. Spink, "The Vākāṭaka's Flowering."
3. The seventeen are 1, 2, 4, L6, U6, 7, 11, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 26RW, 26LW. The five are 1, 19, 26, 26LW, 26RW. Cave 8 must have had a loose image (now missing) because the stone at the lower level of the shrine is very bad, being largely composed of friable red bole. The Buddha in the Ghaṭotkacha *vihāra* could be counted as one more image that had to be quickly completed, whereas the Buddhas in Caves 3 and 4A at Aurangabād would join the five that were finished in normal course.
4. Upendragupta surely would have dedicated his Cave 19 at the "eleventh hour" (actually at "one minute to midnight"), even if it was never inscribed, so it may well have been used for anxious worship for a few days or weeks. For discussion of the images of Cave 1 and 19, see below.
5. The main image in Cave 26 and that in the right wing were also completed in normal course, but both had to be cramped into spaces different from those originally intended. Even the Buddha image in the left wing may have been hurried to completion in the nervous climate of 478. This could explain why the shrine antechamber pillars, originally following the pattern of those in Cave 20, were decorated while still in their blocked-out (square) format; see also n. 21. The Cave 26 Left Wing Buddha image was probably made in the less up-to-date *padmāsana* style because a serious flaw in the rock would have cut through the legs of a *pralambapādāsana* image.
6. The following articles by the author deal specifically with particular images discussed here: "Ajaṇṭā's Chronology: Cave 1's Patronage," *Chhavi II* (Banares: Bharat Kala Bhavan, 1981), 144–57; "Ajaṇṭā's Chronology: Cave 7's Twice-born Buddha," in *Studies in Buddhist Art of South Asia*, ed. A. K. Narain (New Delhi: Kanak Publications, 1985), 103–16; "Ajaṇṭā's Chronology: The Problem of Cave Eleven," *Ars Orientalis* 7 (1968): 155–68; "Ajaṇṭā's Chronology: The Crucial Cave," *Ars Orientalis* 10 (1975): 143–69 (concerned with Cave 16). These and other articles (see nn. 1, 7, and 29) discuss most of the other images under consideration here as well. An overview has most recently been published in *Maharashtra Pathik* 2.1 (September 1990): 5–17 (containing an outdated time chart); A "rebuttal" by Karl Khandalavala appears on pp. 18–21 of the same number, and later issues will contain my response to him and to A. Jamkhedkar, "Some Reflections on Professor Spink's Chronology at Ajaṇṭā," *Makārāshtra Pathik* 2.3 (April 1991): 14–15.
7. For a general discussion of these developments see W. Spink, "Ajaṇṭā's Chronology: Politics and Patronage," in *Kaladarsana*, ed. J. Williams (New Delhi: Oxford and IBH in collaboration with American Institute of Indian Studies, 1981), 109–26.
8. See the monk Buddhahadra's Cave 26 inscription, in G. Yazdani, *Ajaṇṭā* (London: Oxford, 1955), 4:114–18.
9. See n. 6 for a brief discussion of the evidence.
10. Actually, it is reasonable to assume that work would have stopped on the Cave 26 complex not only very suddenly but prior to the time it stopped on all or most other caves, since Cave 26 was so intimately associated with the Aśmakas. However, the difference was hardly more than a matter of months; and the fact that Cave 26 had been merely roughed out (rather than detailed) at this point, and was later much reworked, makes it impossible to compare it to other caves as they appeared in 468, except in rather general terms.
11. We have again excluded the (presumed missing) image of Cave 8 from the discussion. See n. 3.
12. Admittedly, the whole rear area of Cave L6 was very rough when the crisis occurred, but it appears that the patron did not continue much excavation at this point. Instead, he expediently plastered over these areas (possibly not even getting to paint the rear hall wall at this point), since he could rather quickly "complete" the cave in this way.
13. See the central porch medallion and doorway decoration, executed only after the doorway's carving had been completed in 468. The painting of the left aisle wall was hurriedly started *before* the adjacent ceiling, both having been begun before the wall (at its upper levels) was properly smoothed. Even the decoration of the pillars is surprisingly hasty inside the cave; compare what remains on the porch pillars.
14. See W. Spink, "Bāgh: A Study," *Archives of Asian Art* 30 (1976/77): 143–69.
15. For evidence that the donor's name was Upendragupta, and that he was of the local feudatory ruling house, see Spink, "Ajaṇṭā's Chronology: The Crucial Cave," 143 n. 2.
16. Various projecting portions at the lower wall level, especially in the rear, are clearly unfinished, while the wall surfaces themselves are often abnormally rough beneath the masking plaster. A few cells were also unfinished at this time but were fitted out with later-style doorways after 475; only Cell R6, with its 470–71-type projecting fitting, was left totally unfitted out.
17. It is hard to believe that such an important record would have been merely painted; but even if it *had* been, this would only confirm the need for haste. In any case, no traces of painted letters remain.
18. The small medallion on the beam connecting the two front center pillars does show distinct damage from use of its hook (now missing); this probably occurred, however, when the cave became a focus of attention again in the Period of Disruption (479–80).
19. Quoted from verse 24 of Upendragupta's Ajaṇṭā Cave 17 inscription, translated in V. V. Mirashi, *Inscriptions of the Vākāṭakas* (Ootacamund: Government Epigraphist for India, 1963), 127–29. The inscription is replete with such



- references to Upendragupta's trust in "the power of the expenditure of wealth," as well as to his generosity, by virtue of which he "caused the joy of suppliants by conferring gifts (on them)."
20. The heavy deposits of grime in Cave 17, like those in Cave L6, suggest that these caves were the first two put into ritual use, in 471 and 468 respectively. In Cave 17, the manner in which the cells were sequentially fitted out, generally proceeding from front to back, suggests that they began to be used as soon as they were habitable—even before the cave was dedicated.
  21. One possible exception is on the shrine doorway of Cave 26LW, where one of the multiple Buddhas framing the doorway has his proper right hand in *abhāya mudrā*, clearly because of a flaw where his hand would otherwise be. Since this doorway (like that of the porch) was being decorated very late (i.e., in 478), it is quite possible that it had not been completed when the Āśmakas' control of the cave ended and that the doorway was therefore finished in the more uncontrolled clime of 479, at the behest of the monks still remaining at the site.
  22. Mirashi, *Inscriptions*, verse 10.
  23. The projections in Cave 1's rear cells, which had not even been supplied with their pivot holes when the Hiatus occurred, were just sliced away to the degree necessary to allow the new recessed mode to be cut. In some other cells, the old projections were abandoned but left intact when the doors were refitted in the new mode after 475; for an example, see Spink, "Politics and Patronage," fig. 8.
  24. Had controls been relaxed during the Hiatus, we would surely find intrusive images interrupting the programmed work done after 475; but we do not. Indeed, all obvious intrusions at the site "fit" into a much later period (479-80), as can be seen by studying them in connection with table 2.
  25. W. Spink, "Ajaṇṭā's Chronology."
  26. Intrusions were never placed in or on the caves until the main image had been dedicated and put into use. A mere "census" of the site makes this clear. (Images were, however, sometimes placed in the courtyards of unfinished caves or in unused areas of scarp between the caves.)
  27. The *Daśakumāracarita* says, curiously but perhaps suggestively, that "he filled the life of a man with worthy deeds, yet for the unworthiness of his subjects was translated into divinity" (trans. A. Ryder, *The Ten Princes* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927], 100). This by no means suggests that the Āśmakas, despite their plottings, were responsible for Hariṣeṇa's death; but on the other hand a poisoning could easily have gone unrecognized.
  28. This assumes that the group that was plugged in was as conventional in size as in placement.
  29. This is most evident from the fact that the "normal" progress of work continued on them during 478, but the iconographic and stylistic connections between them and Cave 26 are also striking. See my article, "A Recently Discovered Buddha Image at Aurangabād," for the R. C. Agrawala Felicitation Volume, forthcoming 1992.
  30. In both Cave 7 and Cave 21, the preparatory plastering for the paintings done at this time was applied over surfaces that were not yet fully smoothed.
  31. This conclusion accords with our "rule" that intrusions (of which this cave has many) were placed only in caves where the image had already been dedicated, or was about to be dedicated, as could have been the case if the image here had been started by the original donor in 478. Admittedly, it is conceivable that new donors took over the abandoned cave in 479 and treated it as if it were their own shrinelet—as they did in the court "shrinelets" (originally cells or cell complexes) of Caves U6, 19, and 24.
  32. Since there are traces of color elsewhere on the *Parinirvāṇa* scene, it is conceivable that this area was painted too but that the surface paint has fallen away. Even if this is so, the ambulatory decoration was evidently abandoned in mid course when time ran out in 478, for the majority of the panels are intrusive.
  33. See n. 7. The Āśmakas' rout of the Vākāṭakas is further reflected, scarcely a year later, in the intrusive Buddha images placed in Cave 16 by Buddhābhadrā's associate, Dharmadatta; obviously Varāhadeva no longer controlled the cave by this time.
  34. See R. C. Majumdar and A. S. Altekar, ed., *The Vākāṭaka-Gupta Age* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1967), 189ff.
  35. According to the *Daśakumāracarita*, the son of the Āśmaka minister came to the Vākāṭaka court "pretending to have been exiled by his father." See V. Satakopan et al., *Daṇḍin's Daśakumāracarita* (Madras: V. Ramaswamy Sastrulu and Sons, 1962), 145. This explains how he could have been accepted there even after Āśmakā had renounced its ties to the imperial house (in 478). The father of this "son of the minister of Āśmaka" must have been the current minister, referred to in Buddhābhadrā's inscription (n. 8), "who accomplishes, with tact and sweetness only, even such tasks as would normally call for rigours and active struggle." He seems to have bequeathed some of these qualities of devousness and subtlety to this son.
  36. See n. 1 for discussion.
  37. Monks obviously continued to live in the caves for at least a decade or so after 480, as we can tell by the wear in various cell doorway pivots; but the very lack of wear and tear and grime in such caves suggests that this period of residence was very limited. Perhaps the caves were finally abandoned when the Āśmakas, with their Buddhist inclinations, lost control of the region, although the date of this is uncertain.
  38. See the *Daśakumāracarita*, 152.
  39. See n. 1.

# SHAPING THE WIND: TASTE AND TRADITION IN FIFTH-CENTURY SOUTH CHINA

By AUDREY SPIRO

A mind which has become a prey to imbecility will reject even the Duke of Chou or Confucius, to say nothing of the teaching of the holy *hsien*.

—Baopuzi<sup>1</sup>

## *Introduction*

ONE FUNCTION OF STUDIES OF PATRONAGE IN THE VISUAL arts is to broaden our understanding, if not of artistic inspiration, at least of how certain art forms once created first gain acceptance and then authority, so shaping and dominating viewers' aesthetic sensibilities that they can but respond with the conviction that the imagery they behold is the "correct" imagery. A study of successful deviation from established forms—one, that is, that gains acceptance and influence—must therefore consider the taste of the intended viewers.

The figures that form the basis of this study are offered as examples of artistic response to the demands of taste. For the present purpose (unlike many others), it little matters whether their original invention was by artists or artisans; I assume that both played a part in the history of these images. Their roots in much earlier forms are clear; more complex are the religious, historico-social, and artistic processes that combined to create new aesthetic values that required alteration of old forms.

## *Upward Mobility in the Realm of Immortals*

Three brick tombs unearthed in recent years in present-day Danyang county in Jiangsu province are believed to have housed members of the Xiao family, which ruled as the Southern Qi dynasty from A.D. 479 to 502.<sup>2</sup> Relief murals in these tombs are pictorial evidence for the transformation of social ideals and religious beliefs that began with the fall of the Han dynasty. By the end of the fifth century, that transformation had sufficiently matured to leave its mark on conventional imagery, products of artisan workshops.

One of the three imperial tombs, the Xiu'anling at Huqiao, has been identified as that of Xiao Dao-sheng (d. A.D. 478), who was elevated posthumously as Emperor Jing. The tomb at Jianshan is tentatively assigned to either Xiao Changmao (known also as

Wenhui), crown prince and heir apparent to the second Qi emperor, Wu (r. A.D. 482–93), or to Xiao Baojuan, the penultimate Qi ruler, who ruled briefly from A.D. 499 to 501. A second tomb at Huqiao is believed to be that of the last emperor, Xiao Baorong, who ruled even more briefly until A.D. 502.

Thus, all three are likely to have been built within a space of nine years, between A.D. 493 and 502, and, although badly damaged, the remains suggest that their pictorial programs must have been very similar, if not identical. Construction of corridor and chamber walls included murals assembled from a multiplicity of small gray bricks, each bearing in mostly fine-line relief details of the total composition. The murals from two of the tombs very likely came from the same workshop, perhaps even from the same molds.<sup>3</sup>

Amidst swirling cloud dust and showers of blossoms, feathered, two-legged creatures with human—or almost human—faces prance before racing tigers and dragons on the long walls of the tomb chambers. They wave flywhisks or sheaves of grasses or extend to their animal companions small flaming ladles (figs. 1–2).<sup>4</sup>

Similar compositions that include feathered, two-legged beings are found so frequently in the funerary art of earlier centuries that their presence in these imperial tombs of the late fifth century evokes little surprise. They are merely more transcendents (*xian*, *shenxian*) leading more auspicious and directional animals, the latter—the Green Dragon of the East and the White Tiger of the West—appearing in Chinese art as early as the fifth century B.C., if not earlier.<sup>5</sup> The later finds are thus pictorial conventions reflecting long- and commonly-held beliefs about cosmic relationships, the nature of immortality, and the afterworld.<sup>6</sup>

Close examination of these Qi transcendents, however, suggests that they are notably different from their Han-dynasty ancestors—found in all regions of China—painted, carved, molded, or cast on lacquer furnishings, bronze mirrors, ceramic jars, tomb and coffin walls, etc. (figs. 3–6). Although these predecessors of the Qi images vary in appearance, they may all be characterized as somewhat brutish—humanoid, perhaps, in their two-legged prancing but goat-like in their facial characteristics and rearing stance. Sometimes slender, they are as often stocky or dumpy,



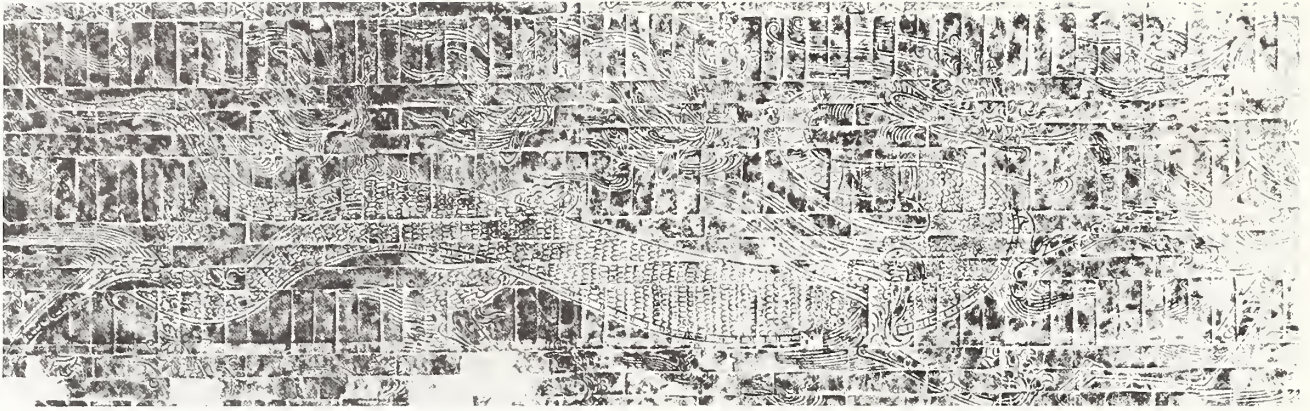


FIG. 1. *Immortal with Dragon*. Rubbing of brick relief mural, tomb at Huqiao, Danyang county, Jiangsu province. Late fifth century.  
After Yao and Gu, *Liuchao yishu*.

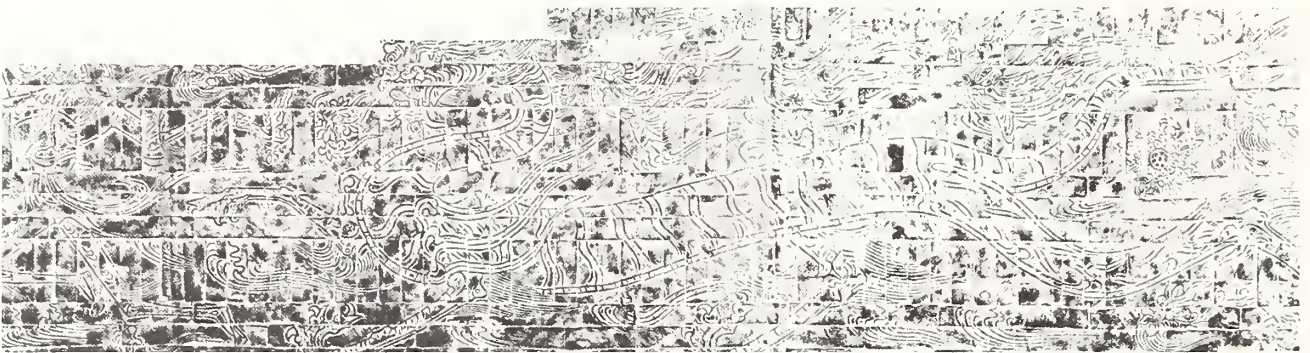


FIG. 2. *Immortal with Tiger*. Rubbing of brick relief mural, tomb at Huqiao, Danyang county, Jiangsu province. Late fifth century.  
After Yao and Gu, *Liuchao yishu*.

Disneyland characters improbably defying gravity as they gambol in the void. The formal variations derive in part from changing beliefs over the centuries, in part from regional differences in such beliefs as well as in art styles, and in part from developments over time. But they seem also to be a function of some uncertainty over the precise characteristics of transcendents.

Immortals are mentioned in a variety of contemporaneous texts. Some of these, *fu* for example, fall into the category of literature. The artisans who fabricated the visual representations were unlikely to have been familiar with them, although their patrons surely were. For purposes of contrast, the other writings, varied as they are, may be classified, *faute de mieux*, as “how-to” or “prescription” texts. Such writings were not necessarily intended as prescriptions for achieving immortality. Yet from their accounts of immortals, lessons could be gleaned by those who yearned to join them. All such works drew on beliefs universally held; rich and poor, educated and illiterate—save for a few Wang Chongs, all believed in the possibility of cheating old age and death. Many texts, however,

would have had a limited readership (*Huainanzi* or *Lun Heng*, for example); others (e.g., *Liexian zhuan*) probably enjoyed wider circulation. Whereas the transcendents in Han-dynasty *fu* are mere tropes of literature, at least some of the prescription texts of the same period, in contrast, were born of the same needs as funerary art—to cope with the greatest human fears. Even if we were to assume a connection between Han literature and its funerary art, we would have difficulty; for, although we are told in detail where transcendents go, what they ride, or what they do, they are never physically described. Indeed, they seem to be shapeless, as Huan Tan suggests in his *Fu on Looking for the Immortals*—“Oh, how unsettled you were, how overflowing!”<sup>7</sup>

It seems more appropriate, therefore, to search the prescription texts for correlatives—as Jacobus a Voragine’s *Golden Legend* was to early Renaissance narrative paintings, so, for instance, the *Liexian zhuan* may have been to later Han art. We learn from one text that transcendents dwell in mountains and rivers, from another that they ride the clouds. The *Zhuangzi* says their skin is like ice or snow; *Huainanzi* implies a





FIG. 3. *Transcendent with Dragon*. Line drawing of a detail of a painted lacquer pillow excavated from a tomb in Hanjiang county, Jiangsu province. Late Western Han (206 B.C.–A.D. 9). After Wenwu, 1988, no. 2.



FIG. 5. *Transcendent*. Rubbing of a detail from a stone relief, tomb in Suining county, Jiangsu province. Eastern Han (A.D. 25–221). After Jiangsu Xuzhou Han huaxiangshi, 1959.

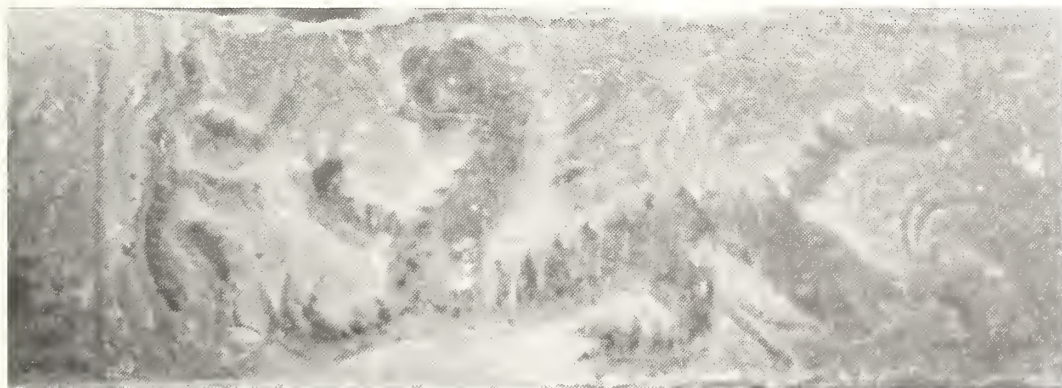


FIG. 6. *Transcendent with Tiger*. Baked brick relief, tomb at Gaochun county, Jiangsu province. Eastern Han (A.D. 25–221). Zhenjiang Museum.

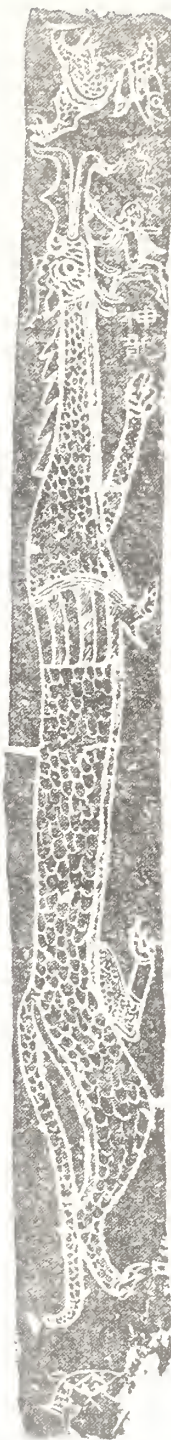


FIG. 4. *Transcendent with Dragon*. Rubbing of stone relief excavated from a tomb at Bo county, Anhui province. Eastern Han (A.D. 25–221). After Wenwu, 1978, no. 8.



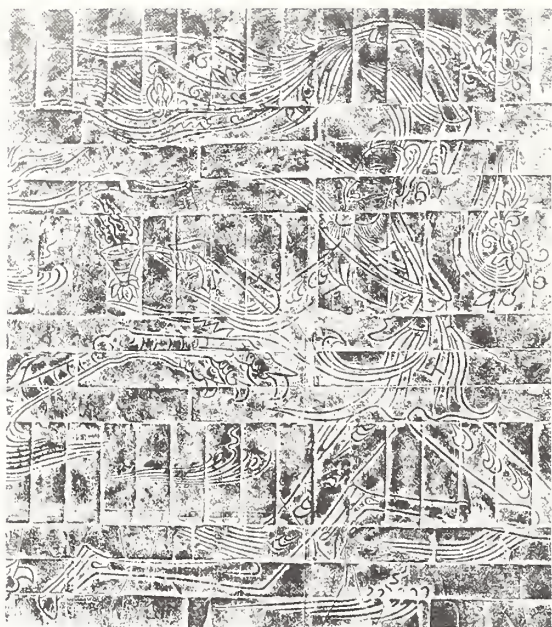


FIG. 7. *Transcendent*. Detail of fig. 1.  
After Yao and Gu, *Liuchao yishu*.

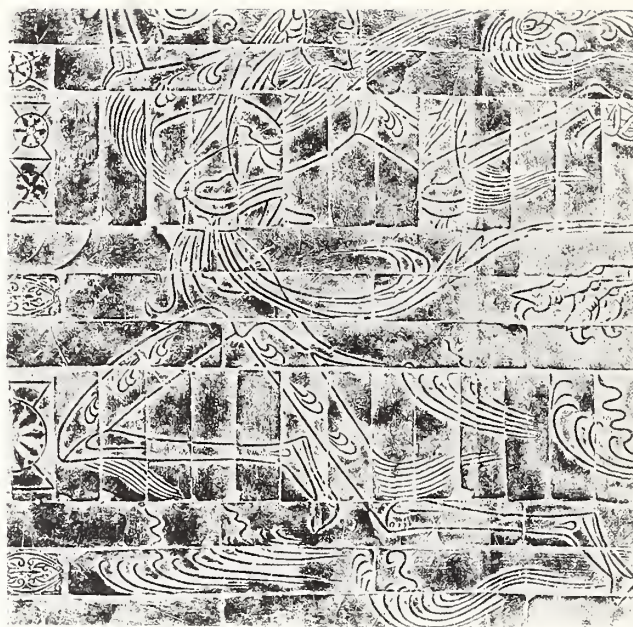


FIG. 8. *Transcendent*. Detail of fig. 2. After Yao and Gu, *Liuchao yishu*.

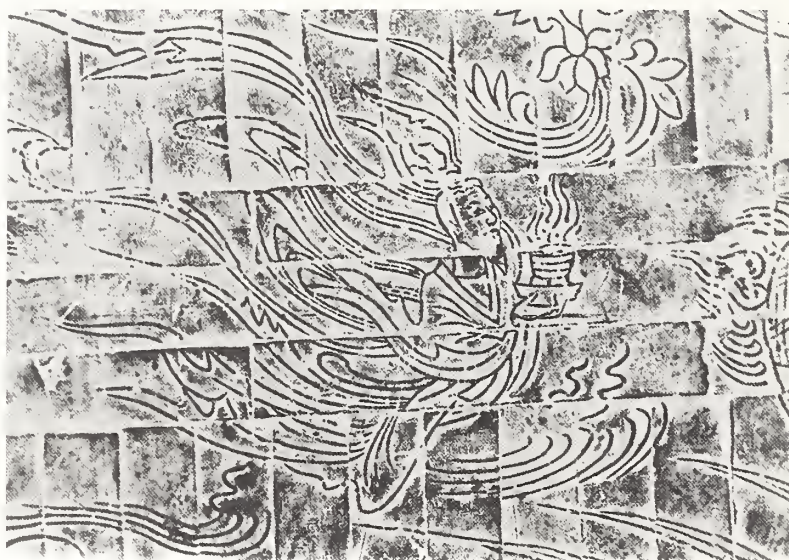


FIG. 9. *Celestial*. Detail of fig. 1.  
After Yao and Gu, *Liuchao yishu*.

scaly skin when it describes footless spirits (*shen*) with faces of men and bodies of dragons.<sup>8</sup> Many centuries later, Baopuzi tells us the *xian* have black down on their bodies.<sup>9</sup> They have wings, but then they do not have wings. Even though they do not actually have wings, they are nevertheless depicted with wings.<sup>10</sup> Sometimes they are men, but sometimes they are spirits (*shen*).<sup>11</sup> They jump over hills; but on the other hand, they fly through the air. Precise description, in fact, is noticeably rare.

The Southern Qi transcendents, in contrast to their Han-Wei predecessors, have more human features; their slenderness is elegant (figs. 7–8). They dance in

the clouds and lure their tigers and dragons with commanding, aristocratic gestures, while above them soar smaller creatures, human in form but identified by inscription as celestials (*tianren*, figs. 9–12). Some, with delicate oval faces, appear to be females; the squarer jaws and larger noses of others suggest that they are males. Decorously draped in voluminous, flowing garments, lacking wings or even feathers, they are yet so light they float. Erect, their backs slightly arched and their knees bent at an acute angle, they hover with dignity. As their skirts and ribbons twist and fly in the wind, they lose none of their unruffled composure.





FIG. 10. *Celestial* Detail of fig. 2.  
After Yao and Gu, *Liuchao yishu*.

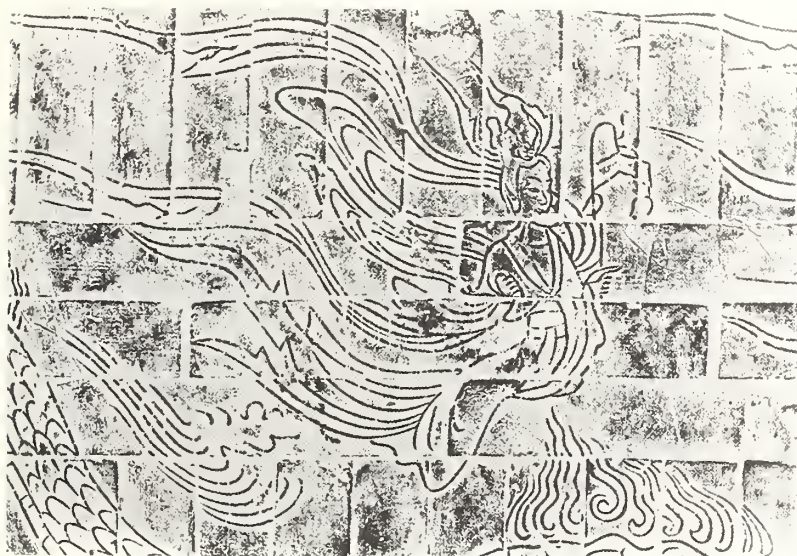


FIG. 11. *Celestial* Detail of fig. 1.  
After *Liuchao yishu*.



FIG. 12. *Celestial* Rubbing, detail of brick relief mural, tomb at Jianshan, Danyang county, Jiangsu province. Late fifth century A.D. Courtesy Amy and Martin J. Powers.



Flying creatures are not an innovation; they appear in funerary art long before the fifth century. Horizontal and stiff, arms and legs outstretched, such Han-dynasty images are identical to their vertical counterparts, save that their forms have been rotated ninety degrees (fig. 13). All these flying images of Han have wings. Even post-Han images, such as the insouciant predecessor on the ceiling of a late fourth-/early fifth-century tomb in Gansu province, require wings to stay aloft (fig. 14). The wingless floating creatures of the Qi tombs, however, seem to be unknown in earlier centuries, although a few small flying creatures on mirrors of the Wu-Western Jin period are ambiguous in this respect. These latter images are usually regarded as early Buddhist forms.<sup>12</sup>

Yoshimura Rei has suggested that the Danyang celestials owe their transformation to the introduction of the Buddhist faith and its imagery.<sup>13</sup> Yet they

little resemble the small flying creatures of the mirrors nor such later depictions of *apsarases* as, for example, the anatomically impossible images painted on the walls of Caves 272 and 257 at Dunhuang—the former believed to have been made prior to, and the latter following, the accession of the territory by the Northern Wei in A.D. 439 (fig. 15).<sup>14</sup> Nor do the plump, round-faced *apsarases*, whether half nude or fully clothed, in the later fifth-century caves at Yungang seem likely predecessors (fig. 16). Reliefs from Caves 6 and 7, for example, with their awkward postures and almost strident joyousness, are unlikely models for the unobtrusively decorous celestials of the Danyang tombs.

An almost contemporaneous Buddhist image with figures similar to the new immortals of the Qi tombs exists, however, and it is of southern provenance. A small gilt bronze ex-voto in the Musée Guimet in Paris



FIG. 13. *Flying Immortal*. Detail of a rubbing, stone relief, tomb in Suining county, Jiangsu province. Eastern Han (A.D. 25–221). After Jiangsu Xuzhou Han huaxiangshi, 1959.



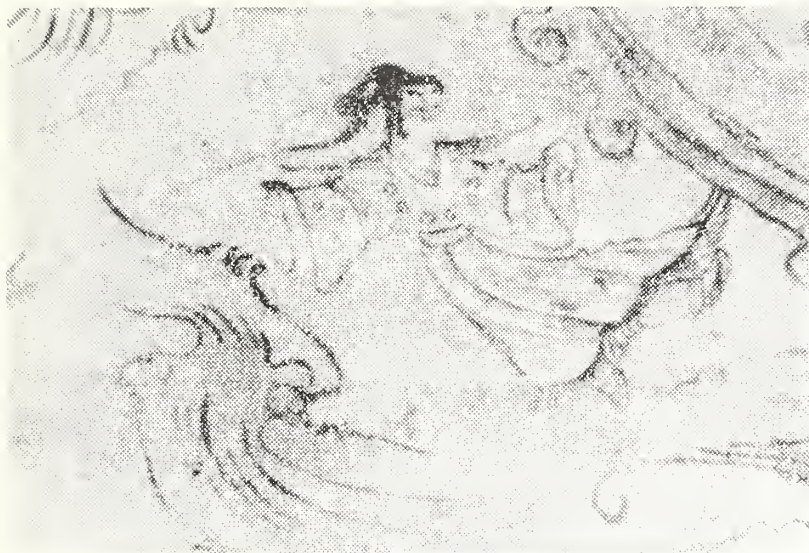


FIG. 14. *Flying Immortal*. Detail of painted mural from a tomb at Jiuquan, Gansu province. Late fourth–early fifth century. After *Wenwu*, 1979, no. 6.



FIG. 15. *Apsarases*. Detail of a wall painting from Cave 272 at Dunhuang. Northern Liang (A.D. 421–39). After *Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogao ku* 1.



FIG. 16. *Apsarases*. Detail from the central pillar of Cave 6 at Yungang. Sandstone relief, A.D. 465–94. After *Yungang shiku*, 1977.





FIG. 17. Buddhist ex-voto, gilt bronze. Liu-Song dynasty, A.D. 478. H: 9.75 inches. Cliché Musées Nationaux, Paris.

bears an inscription dating the work to the Liu-Song dynasty, in accordance with the year 478 (fig. 17). The seated Buddha image is backed by a nimbus surrounded by a pierced border on which five flying *apsarases* alternate with lotus blossoms. The skirts and scarves of these tiny creatures, who are swathed in robes, billow rhythmically behind them, evoking the invisible wind that sustains them. They contrast markedly with the nearly contemporaneous small flying creatures carved in relief on the back of a sandstone Buddhist sculpture excavated in Xingping county in Shaanxi province (fig. 18). The inscription includes a date corresponding to A.D. 471.<sup>15</sup> There, two figures wearing trousers and one wearing a *dhoti* are joined in an international *pas de quatre en l'air* by a figure in Chinese robes, its body laterally bent to form an improbable right angle. Unlike the long upswept garments of the southern *apsarases*, the foot-length

hem of this Chinese figure's robe undulates in defiance of gravity and points both up and down, while the flying scarves suggest that the wind must be blowing from all directions at once. The posture of this fifth-century figure of northern provenance is very similar to the posture of flying creatures, who do not wear Chinese robes, on two much earlier mirrors from the south.<sup>16</sup> None of the Buddhist compositions discussed features the simple conventions of parallel swirls and lines or approximates the tumbling floral twists that accompany the Danyang celestials and transcendents and convey a sense of rushing movement.<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, regardless of the certain impact of the Buddhist faith on Chinese ideas of death and the afterlife and regardless of its imagery—borrowed first perhaps as merely more auspicious symbols and later as true religious iconography<sup>18</sup>—it is unlikely that the style of the flying immortals of the Southern Qi tombs derives either from the early Wu-Western Jin forms of the south or from fifth-century examples of Buddhist art from the north.<sup>19</sup> That their closest stylistic counterpart, the Liu-Song ex-voto, is also a product of southern workshops is due, I will argue, less to the direct influence of Buddhist art and more to the fact that religious and funerary art of south China were affected by the values of an elite patron group.<sup>20</sup> With their Chinese robes, their slenderness of form, their elbows close to the body, their winding and floating draperies, these new celestials succeed, as earlier images of the tradition do not, in achieving a new authority: they have transcended gravity to float in a higher realm, ruled by a new *gravitas* of poise, dignity, and decorum. The style of these celestials—perhaps intended to represent deities of a specifically Daoist religious faith but most certainly the symbols of long-held, indigenous beliefs—is as much a function of taste and its history as it is of formal development.<sup>21</sup>

Relatively little southern mural art of the Period of Disunion has survived, and the few works extant are insufficient to enable us to trace the formal developments that must have occurred between such Latter Han productions as, to take but one example, the capering transcendent who faces and beckons with both hands to a racing tiger on a small relief brick from Gaochun county in Jiangsu province (fig. 6) and the large aristocratic images of the late fifth century. Small figures on Wu-Jin bronze mirrors (fig. 19), whatever their iconography, seem little different in style from the Gaochun image.<sup>22</sup> Neither the dumpy press-molded creatures—certainly otherworldly—found on Yue-ware of the third and early fourth centuries nor the accompanying feathered beings sprigged on the bodies of many of these urns suggests





FIG. 18. Detail from a stone Buddhist stele. Northern Wei, A.D. 471. Shaanxi Provincial Museum, Xi'an.



FIG. 19. Rubbing, detail of bronze mirror from Changsha, Hunan, latter half of third century.  
After *Kaogu*, 1985, no. 7.



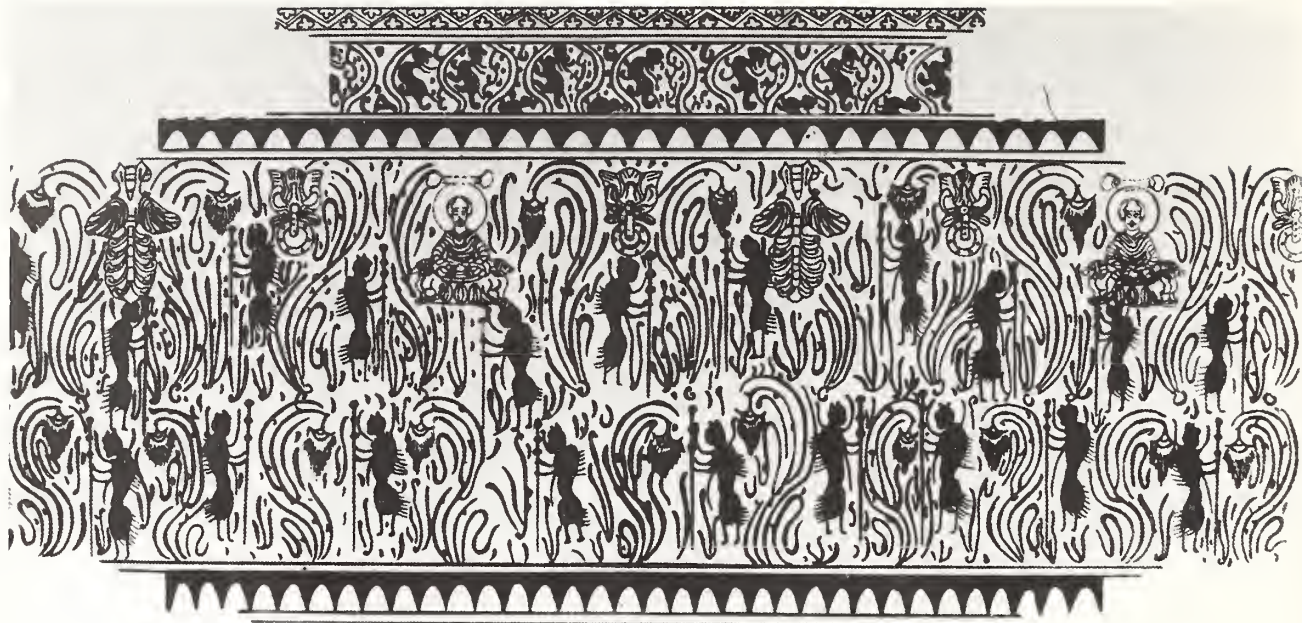


FIG. 20. Drawing of painted underglaze design from a Yue vessel excavated in Nanjing. Late fourth–early fifth centuries. After *Wenwu*, 1988, no. 6.

formal advances over their Han counterparts.<sup>23</sup> A recently published urn with underglaze painted decoration features slender creatures, standing erect, as if on guard (fig. 20).<sup>24</sup> They wear feathered garments and with both hands grasp long staffs with triple knobs, similar to the staff held by the Xuzhou *xian* of Han times (fig. 5) and by the walking figures often sprigged on other Wu-Jin vessels. Surrounding them, as overall ornamentation, are clusters of waving blades of grass. From each cluster a single blossom depends from one stalk; perhaps it is a plant of immortality—to judge from its hairiness, perhaps the *actractylis* (*zhu*), beloved of immortals. Sun Zuoyun has suggested that in the Han dynasty the staff was a tally for the feather-cloaked magician or wonderworker (*fang-shu*), part human, part transcendent—the credential that identified him as heaven’s emissary, sent to welcome the deceased.<sup>25</sup> Wu Hung has called attention to the second-century immortality scenes from Shandong in which Xi Wang Mu receives homage from figures holding stalks or branches. He relates this imagery to accounts of the Queen Mother’s cult in the *Han shu*, in which worshippers held stalks of straw or hemp, “wand[s] of the goddess’ edict.”<sup>26</sup>

On the Qi murals, the staffs have disappeared, possibly to have merged with the stalks of grass now firmly grasped by the *xian*, who neither wait in attendance on the Queen Mother nor caper beseechingly. They seem more authoritative than their precursors as they stand tall and race ahead with such assurance they need not look towards their destination, all the

while brandishing their grasses (now both tally and food of immortality?) commandingly at their tigers and dragons. It is clear that these immortals, in form and composition, descend from earlier images, but they are much altered in style.<sup>27</sup>

As for the celestials, an *apsaras* similar to the Qi celestials can be seen in the fragmented upper left of a rubbing of relief scenes from the back of a stele reported to have been found at the Wanfosi in Chengdu in the nineteenth century. Early publications reported a date of A.D. 427 by inscription. A more recent publication, however, cautiously suggests either a Liu-Song (A.D. 420–79) or Liang (A.D. 502–57) date. Certainly on stylistic grounds a late fifth- or sixth-century date is more tenable.<sup>28</sup> Later documents report paintings of immortals (*xian*, *shenxian*) but fail to tell us what these figures looked like. In the ninth century, Zhang Yanyuan noted that Gu Kaizhi (ca. A.D. 345–406), for example, executed paintings of immortals, including one of three celestial maidens (*tiannu*).<sup>29</sup> Li Yanshou, writing in the seventh century, described in detail the decorations in the Yushou Hall, rebuilt following a late fifth-century fire in the palace. The emperor, Xiao Baojuan (who may have been the occupant of one of the Qi tombs), supervised the new construction. The décor in the bed-chamber included images of flying immortals (*feixian*) embroidered and woven on the hangings as well as of immortals (*shenxian*) painted on the walls.<sup>30</sup> Very likely these images, created for secular purposes, resembled their contemporaneous funerary

counterparts. Nonetheless, we can only speculate about the appearance of these images mentioned in texts or about the many depictions that must have been produced in the region over the centuries.

We need not speculate, however, about the importance of the new social ideals and religious beliefs that slowly evolved during these centuries and that affected formal developments in art. The literary and historical evidence for their importance is clear, and the pictorial remains from these Danyang tombs are prime visual examples of the new values. An examination of such evidence suggests that the new-style immortals of the Qi tombs, celestials and transcendents, are visual reflections of emerging, systematized beliefs associated with prominent sects of the Daoist religion. This is not to suggest that they are esoteric images, associated with one or another specific sect and designed to convey hidden meanings to the elect. On the contrary, as I have noted, they are conventional funerary imagery, but old forms subtly altered to please new tastes. It is perhaps not so different from the process whereby Indian and Central Asian Buddhist forms (to say nothing of texts) were, over time, adapted to Chinese taste—witness the Buddha image and *apsarases* of the Liu-Song exvoto. And although the iconography of the Xiao murals leads me to emphasize in this discussion developments in the Daoist religion, it is well to remember that many of the men who would have seen these murals—indeed, the families who commissioned them—were not only seekers of immortality but also often devout Buddhists. They may or may not also have been adherents of the Mao Shan or Ling Bao sects of Daoism; they clearly were interested in important revelations of both sects, for the revelations, regardless of source, were purported to hold the key to the real future that had been sought for centuries. Whatever the institutional competition for congregations and patrons, these believers were not bound by the demands of a Judaeo-Christian either/or, and they clearly saw neither logical nor spiritual conflict in keeping their options open.<sup>31</sup> As the late and greatly missed Anna Seidel reminded us, “Immortality is the name of the game in all Chinese religion.”<sup>32</sup>

Present-day Danyang is very near Zhurong, from the beginning associated with those wondrous revelations of the fourth century that were to win so many aristocratic adherents in the ensuing decades. Based on earlier beliefs and practices, the Mao Shan texts (*Shangqing jing*)—the sacred and tangible record of the revelations—circulated throughout the fifth century; they were collated and edited by Tao Hongjing (A.D. 456–536), probably in the last decade of that century. Presumably, Tao’s retirement from the Southern Qi court for that purpose, as well as to experiment

with elixirs for achieving immortality, was a dispensation granted by the emperor.<sup>33</sup> The dates of the Qi tombs thus correspond with known imperial interest in the texts.<sup>34</sup> These transformations of old beliefs—revealed by heavenly visitants to their earthly disciples—speak of new celestial forms, gracious and radiant creatures who dwell in heavenly palaces, not, like their predecessors, in tree hollows, gourds, or mountain caves. They float in the Void, wander hand in hand with their *bels amis*, unite in the Gauzy Canopy, sow aromatic mists, ascend to the Purple Court, follow the wind and sing with jade flutes.

These new-style celestials are not physically described. Rather, the description of their behavior and the style of that description evoke in the reader new images. They are aristocrats, who disclose themselves to believers with a literary expressiveness absent, for example, from Han-dynasty and even later prescriptive accounts of the transcendent Master Red Pine (*Chisongzi*) or from Ge Hong’s promises of the delights that follow the taking of a single spoonful of cold cinnabar (*handan*), after which immortal boys and jade ladies, not otherwise described, will come to serve you, the serving not otherwise described.<sup>35</sup> The new rewards to the faithful, set forth in the *Shangqing* texts, are more detailed, more complex fantasies. The lyricism of these accounts, often resulting in *double-entendres* almost impossible to translate without descending, at best, to banality, at worst, to vulgarity, transforms and ennobles ancient esoteric practices.<sup>36</sup> Literature has been joined to religion, as was surely necessary if the faith were to appeal to an aristocracy.

The imagery and the literary style of these new texts, now held to be not merely prescriptive but sacred, are the imagery and the literary style of third-century poets like the Cao family, Xi Kang, Ruan Ji—men celebrated and admired in the fourth and fifth centuries by the courtiers of the Southern dynasties—admired, that is, for what they were (or were believed to have been) quite as much as for their literary accomplishments. These Jin and Song courtiers praised, for example, Xi Kang and Ruan Ji as they praised one another—for their freedom from social constraint, their detachment from worldly affairs, their remarkable self-possession, their talents, and their cultivated refinement. All of which, in short, were social ideals of the period. And it is no mere chance that portraits of Xi Kang and Ruan Ji—along with their companions of the Bamboo Grove plus the legendary happy recluse Rong Qiqi (who confounded Confucius)—appear in these imperial tombs of Qi next to the compositions discussed here.<sup>37</sup>

The fourth- and fifth-century depictions of the Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove in Jiangsu





FIG. 21. *The Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove: Xi Kang and Ruan Ji*. Details of a rubbing of a brick relief from a tomb at Xishanqiao, Nanjing, Jiangsu province. Late fourth–early fifth century A.D.



FIG. 22. *The Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove: Wang Rong and Shan Tao*. Detail of a rubbing of a brick relief from a tomb at Wujiacun, Danyang county, Jiangsu province. Late fifth century A.D.

Photograph courtesy James and Nicholas Cahill.

tombs are the earliest extant images of Cultivated Gentlemen (*wenren*) in Chinese art (figs. 21–22). They do not, of course, resemble precisely the immortals depicted in the same fifth-century tombs—that would be inappropriate. But we may note certain similarities in their slenderness, in the floating and tumbled draperies framing motionless bodies, in the isolation of each figure set off by trees; and we may observe how cleverly these elements convey a sense of weightlessness, of dignified composure, and of remoteness—as if the gentlemen have withdrawn to another plane of existence. Unfettered by and scornful of convention yet always refined and cultivated, thoroughly self-possessed whatever the circumstances, drunk or sober, they were social exemplars for the aristocrats of the fourth and fifth centuries at the southern court.

It was these social ideals, aristocratic ideals, that contributed to the shaping of the new Daoist faith, as well as to the Buddhist faith propagated in the south, and to the imagery of both.<sup>38</sup> As the imagery slowly took shape for the aristocratic exemplars of the terrestrial world, so the celestial world followed suit. In turn, the new resplendent visions of the celestial world would reinforce earthly ideals. In the third century, Cao Zhi had praised his nephew's concern for his subjects' well-being. "His Majesty's body floats and is airy," he remarked, in delicate allusion to the ruler's far-reaching, suprahuman vigilance for the welfare of his subjects. By the fourth century, the men at the Eastern Jin court in Jiankang characterized one another similarly—not, however, for their stewardship but for their style. Wang Shao "unmistakably had the plumes of a phoenix." Xie Shang was free, "naturally on a transcendently higher plane of existence (*lingshang*)." Some characterized Wang Xizhi, *not* his calligraphy but the man, as "now drifting like a floating cloud; now rearing up like a startled dragon." (It is perhaps significant that Wang and his family were associated with the recluse Xu Mai, whose kinsmen were the elected beneficiaries of the Mao Shan revelations.) "How light and airy his graceful soaring," the renowned Buddhist Zhi Dun once said of the courtier Wang Meng.<sup>39</sup>

The Mao Shan celestials, as revealed in the texts, are thus remarkably like Xie Shang and Wang Meng, the embodiment of the social ideals of this courtly world. As such, their appeal to adherents, or to potential adherents, must have been greatly enhanced. The fifth-century recluses who had wandered off in pursuit of long life and who were repeatedly summoned—with small success—by members of the imperial family were no untutored wonderworkers. The ruler's gifts to Gu Huan, for example, a deer-tail whisk and a zither (*qin*), were hallmarks of cultivation, appropriate bestowals to a learned man, one whose critical

studies of Mao Shan texts were to be the models for Tao Hongjing's labors.<sup>40</sup> Tao himself, the Ninth Patriarch of the Mao Shan sect, was a scholar and poet. He loved to play the *qin* and excelled in two styles of calligraphy.<sup>41</sup> His first appointment to office came directly from the Qi emperor. Later, as he rambled in nature at his retreat at Mao Shan, those who saw him from afar took him for a transcendent (*xianren*).<sup>42</sup>

The great scholar and poet Shen Yue (A.D. 441–513) dedicated poems to the famous recluse of Mao Shan, and in his inscriptions composed for temple stelae he refers to the Mao Shan hierarchy of transcendents, among whom the Perfected, undreamed of by Baopuzi, are as refined as Tao Hongjing and Shen Yue.<sup>43</sup> It is little wonder, given the emphasis of many *Shangqing* texts on internal alchemy, visualization, and interiorization, that the exquisite sensibilities of these famous terrestrials were by their day matched by their celestial counterparts, the Perfected.<sup>44</sup> For the Perfected also "rein in the clouds and sunrise mists" and recline on stars, as Shen Yue described the Ninth Patriarch.<sup>45</sup> The new pictorial versions of these immortals conform to the new beliefs. Shen Yue vainly sought "the glorious spirit" of Chisongzi, who "pushed aside the mists and took his leave." When he yearned that he too "might obtain the Golden Fluid recipe / And with one word sprout feathered wings," what image could he have envisioned for himself?<sup>46</sup> It is difficult to imagine either of these two cultivated men yearning to be like the transcendents of Han, or even later (fig. 23). But not so difficult to imagine their



FIG. 23. *Transcendent*. Line drawing, detail of a stone relief from a tomb excavated at Yinan, Shandong province. Late second–early third century A.D. After *Yinan guhuaxiang shimu fajue baogao*.





FIG. 24. *Transcendent*. Rubbing of a detail from a brick relief mural, the Xiu'anling at Huqiao, Danyang county, Jiangsu province. Late fifth century A.D. Photograph courtesy James and Nicholas Cahill.

identifying with the immortals of Southern Qi (fig. 24).

Shen Yue, of course, was writing within a well-established tradition, as were the third-century poets I have mentioned, and the yearning to be like Chisongzi was, already in the third century, a trope. But by the fifth-century Chisongzi (and others of his ilk) had become more than a literary commonplace for these aristocrats. The ambiguities of his earlier image had dissolved, replaced by a new, more distinct image. The new vision displayed a celestial world as firmly hierarchical as the human world, and the aristocrat of this world now had religious reassurance that he might find his rightful place in the next. In the context of the new values, the old literary commonplace (Cao Zhi had even wondered if an immortal were a "kind of ape")<sup>47</sup> now bore a religious and social freight that enforced a different perception of Chisongzi for the poet and his reader alike.

Light and airy, soaring above the *xian* in these funerary murals, the celestials demonstrate the increased social complexity of the other world. Composed and unruffled, their substance so refined they require no wings, they exemplify the new decorum—and the new heights to which mortals could aspire.

As for the *xian*, mere immortals on a lower plane than the celestials, they are no longer brutes but transcendent gentlemen of the Supreme Clarity (*Taiqing*). Stock funerary images, products of workshops, they have been reworked, graceful as a floating cloud, in the ideal shape of aristocrats (figs. 25–26). In conformance with new social values, new religious convictions, and a new aesthetic, they no longer strut or somersault but glide and twist with a becoming grace.

The cavorting of earlier images is their one constant. Leaping, flying in the air, running in the mountains—motion, which is to say, transformation, was





FIG. 25. *The Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove: Xi Kang.* Rubbing of a detail from a brick relief mural, tomb at Jianshan, Danyang county, Jiangsu province. Late fifth century A.D. Photograph courtesy Amy and Martin J. Powers.



FIG. 26. *Transcendent.* Detail of a rubbing of a brick relief mural, tomb at Jianshan, Danyang county, Jiangsu province. Late fifth century. Photograph courtesy Amy and Martin J. Powers.



the only perceptual certainty. Short or tall, fat or slender, furry or crystalline—all were acceptable because irrelevant to the immortal's ability to transform himself. The Han, and even later, depictions correspond to the old traditions and their paucity of physical description—whether in the *Zhuangzi* or the centuries' later *Liexianzhuan*—or their ambiguities—whether in *Lun Heng* or the fourth century *Baopuzi*. Ge Hong, that arch-conservative, preserves the old tradition when he tells his doubter that anyone could recognize the *xian*—if only they *all* had square pupils, as some do, or ears reaching to the tops of their heads, as some do, or scales on their bodies, as some do.<sup>48</sup> Such, however, is not the case; from Ge Hong's point of view, these physical signs are irrelevant to the crucial sign of transformation. He does not seek to look like the various legendary immortals to whom he refers; he seeks only their ability to transform himself.

When the immortal becomes an aristocrat, however, and, even more importantly, when the aristocratic adept identifies with that immortal, as the courtier Shen Yue does with Chisongzi, the irrelevant becomes highly relevant. Once more, the literature of the third century provides early models for the later religious values and imagery. In Cao Zhi's description of Fufei, the spirit of the Luo River, for example, the constant of transformation remains, but it is graphically enriched as metaphor. Whereas in *Liexianzhuan* Chisongzi merely ascends and descends,<sup>49</sup> the Wei prince's goddess, always in motion, soars like a swan, flies like a dragon; her form is now bright as the

autumn chrysanthemum, now dim as the clouded moon; she is as restless as wind-driven snow. Metaphor, of course, is to be found in Han literature as well—Huan Tan's immortals soared like the phoenix.<sup>50</sup> Cao Zhi's description of Fufei's physical appearance, however, eschews metaphor and (a rarity) is concrete in detail: her white teeth gleam, her long eyebrows arch; her waist is narrow, her throat slender.<sup>51</sup> The substance into which one is transformed is as important as the act of transformation. By the fifth century, the once-new social and religious values had completed their conquest. The ambiguities of the old tradition had lost their authority; the new images were solidly entrenched. They were now pleasing to rulers, inspiring to cultivated gentlemen—beings with whom one could identify. These were no longer *others* but what *I* might become.

The earlier uncertainty of how transcendents *should* look had allowed artisans degrees of freedom in their depictions that were no longer possible. Whatever the craftsman's own beliefs (and cynic he may have been), the new religious beliefs of his aristocratic patrons imposed, of psychological and aesthetic necessity, a new taste. The fantasy images of Han owe their survival as conventions to the craftsman's ability to reshape old images in conformance with his patrons' increasing certainty about how they looked. The many depictions, evolving over time, that undoubtedly intervened between the earlier forms and the immortals of Qi must have paralleled the cognitive developments of that certainty, their trajec-



Fig. 27. *Apsaras*. Rubbing of relief detail from the Lianhua cave, Longmen, A.D. 516–28. After *Longmen shiku*.



tories intersecting, influencing, and reinforcing one another. Certainty fostered a new decorum, restricting artistic fantasy (at least when commissioned by patrons) to the bounds of the new ideal.

"The distant aims of men of understanding / Are invisible to those of vulgar feeling," Shen Yue remarked in a famous poetic essay.<sup>52</sup> For most who gazed upon the transcendents and celestials of the Qi tombs before their doors were closed, their significance lay in their familiarity. Creatures who flew or danced before tigers and dragons reflected beliefs so long and so commonly held as to warrant an easy acceptance, regardless of their style. For a select few, however, these pictorial conventions had gained a

new authority. The old basic forms (figures dance, figures fly), crucially altered in style (and therein lies artistic creativity), could now bear the freight of personal interpretation and identification. There was no turning back.

### *Afterward/Afterword*

The conquest of the "southern taste" in Buddhist art has been traced many times.<sup>53</sup> The source for the relief *apsarases* of late Northern Wei at the Longmen caves could not be more apparent (figs. 11, 27, 28, 29), nor the swiftness of its journey west



FIG. 28. *Apsaras*. Rubbing of relief detail from the Lianhua cave, Longmen, A.D. 516–28. After *Longmen shiku*.

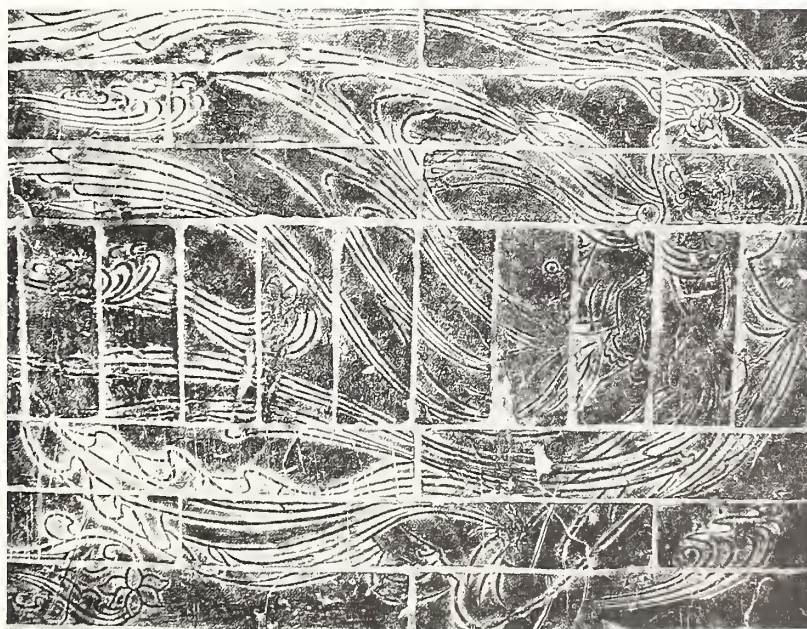


FIG. 29. *Celestial*. Rubbing of a brick relief fragment from a tomb at Huqiao, Danyang county, Jiangsu province. Late fifth century A.D.



more surprising. By the end of Northern Wei rule, the soaring southern aristocrats are seen as *apsarases* in paintings on the gable ceiling of Cave 248 at Dunhuang (fig. 30). The native faith has not been forgotten, however. In paintings on the north and south walls of Cave 249 (datable to the Western Wei period, A.D. 535–57), hovering and bending with seemly grace and fully clad in Chinese robes, Daoist celestials pay homage to the One Who Preaches the Law. In the upper left corner of the painting on the south wall, the celestial grasps firmly a tiny figure, a winged racing dragon (fig. 31). In this cave, the ceiling is painted with a panoply of foreign and

traditional Chinese images, including the deity Xi Wang Mu and her consort, Dong Wang Gong. With their cortèges, they race through the heavens in gorgeous gondolas to witness the miracle.<sup>54</sup> It is a marvelous example of the universal religious stratagem: what you cannot drive out, take in.

Subservient to the Buddha, as they are in Cave 249, these traditional images may be interpreted, deservedly, as exemplifying the Buddhist conquest of China. Yet they also exemplify a counter-conquest, for the taste of the southern, native aristocracy can here be seen in the process of domesticating the foreign faith. It is the Chinese conquest of Buddhism.

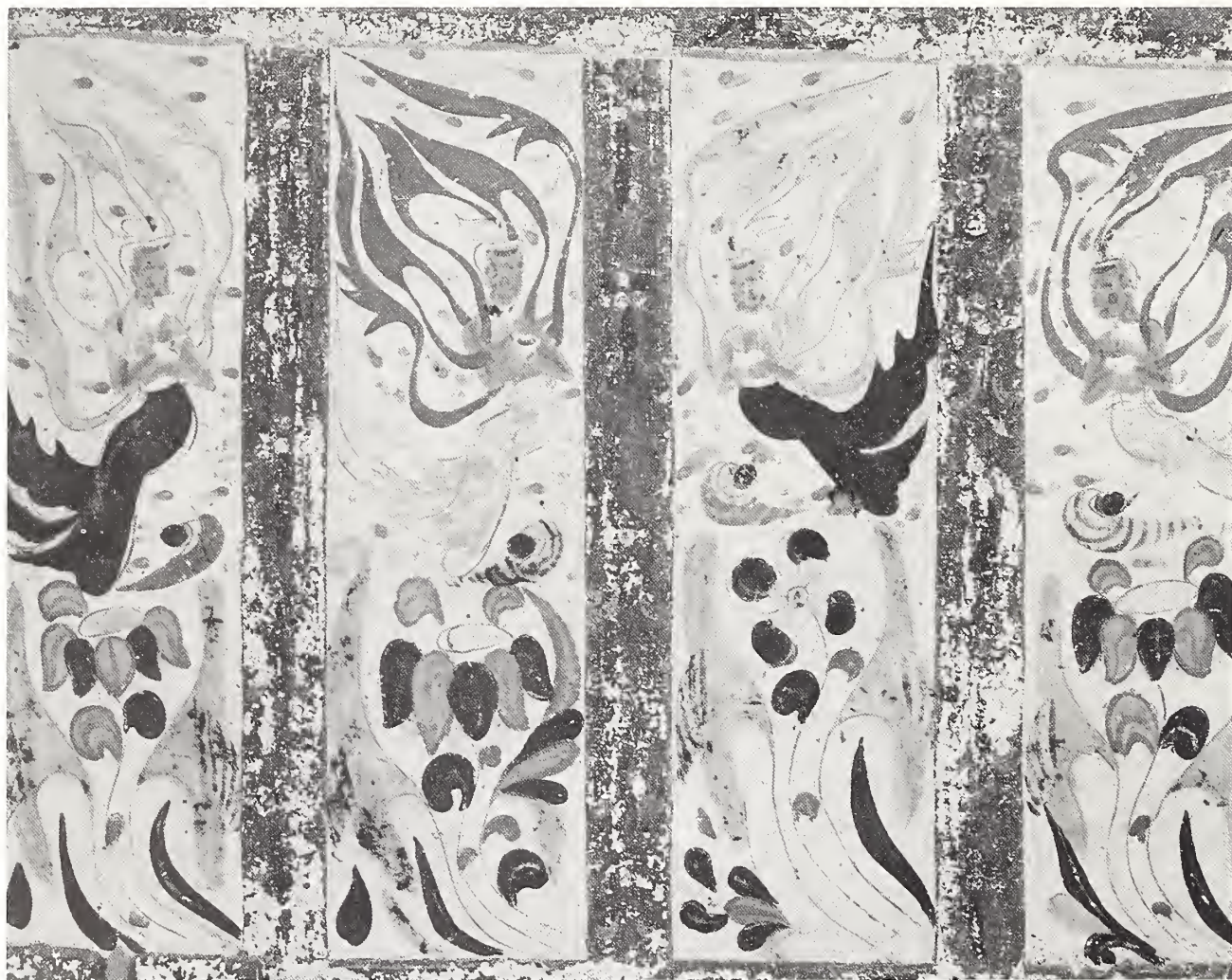


FIG. 30. *Apsarases*. Detail of a mural from the gable-ceiling of Cave 248, Dunhuang, Northern Wei.  
After *Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogao ku* 1.





FIG. 31. *Celestial with Dragon*. Detail from a mural on the south wall of Cave 249 at Dunhuang. Western Wei.  
After *Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogao ku* 1.



## Notes

A germinal version of this paper ("How Light and Airy") was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Washington, D. C., March 18, 1989, and printed, with other panel papers, in *Taoist Resources* 2, no. 2 (November 1990): 43-55. I wish to thank Judith Berling, Gail Bryant, Suzanne Cahill, Donald F. McCallum, and Martin Powers for their helpful comments. Responsibility for errors is mine alone.

1. *Baopuzi neipian*, by Ge Hong, *Baopuzi neiwai pian* (Taipei: Taiwan Shangshu Yinshuguan, 1979), *juan* 2:14. Translated in Joseph Needham et al., *Science and Civilisation in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954-), 2:438.
2. Nanjing bowuyuan, "Jiangsu Danyang Huqiao Nanchao damu ji zhuanke bihua," *Wenwu*, 1974, no. 2:44-56; Nanjing bowuyuan, "Jiangsu Danyangxian Huqiao, Jianshan liang-zuo Nanchao mu zang," *Wenwu*, 1980, no. 2:1-10; Barry Till and Paula Swart, "Two Tombs of the Southern Dynasties at Huqiao and Jianshan in Danyang County, Jiangsu Province," *Chinese Studies in Archeology* 1, no. 3 (1979-80): 74-124. Pictorial remains from the three tombs here discussed are now housed in the Nanjing bowuyuan, Nanjing. I wish to thank the authorities for the many courtesies shown me when I visited there in 1984.
3. Compare, for example, the rubbing from the tomb identified as the Xiu'anling, reproduced as figures 180-81, with that from the tomb at Jianshan, reproduced as figures 213-14, in Yao Qian and Gu Bing, *Liuchao yishu* (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1982).
4. The murals measure approximately 2.40 x 0.94 meters.
5. Suixian Leigudun yihao mu kaogu fajue dui, "Hubei Suixian Zeng Hou Yi mu fajue jianbao," *Wenwu*, 1979, no. 7:10 and pl. 5.2. For Neolithic finds of reproductions of (presumed) dragons and tigers, see Puyang bowuguan et al., "Henan Puyang Xishuipo yizhi fajue jianbao," *Wenwu*, 1988, no. 3:3 and pl. 1.
6. For histories of the subject, see Max Kaltenmark's introduction to his translation, *Le Lie-sien Tchouan: biographies légendaires* (Peking, 1953); Needham, *Science and Civilisation* 5.2:93-114. See also Ying-shih Yü, "Life and Immortality in the Mind of Han China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 25 (1964-65): 80-122. For earlier discussions of the Qi transcendents, see Lin Shuzhong, "Jiangsu Danyang Nan Qi lingmu zhuan yin bihua," *Wenwu*, 1977, no. 1:64-73; Annette L. Juliano, *Teng-hsien: An Important Six Dynasties Tomb* (Ascona: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 1980).
7. *Fanfan hu/lanlan hu*. Timoteus Pokora, "Huan T'an's Fu on Looking for the Immortals," *Archiv Orientalni* 28 (1960): 365, l. 19. The chanter of "Far-off Journey" (*Yuan you*) notes that "My corporeal parts dissolved into a soft suppleness; / And my spirit grew lissom and eager for movement" (David Hawkes, *The Songs of the South* [Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985], 196).
8. Burton Watson, trans., *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 33; *Huainanzi* (Taiwan: Commercial Press, 1969), *juan* 4:14a.
9. *Baopuzi neipian*, *juan* 11:207-8.
10. E.g., Alfred Forke, trans., *Lun Heng* by Wang Chong (1907, 1911; reprint, New York: Paragon, 1962), 1:293, 330. For Wang Chong's insistence that humans cannot become immortals, 1:335ff.
11. E.g., Forke, *Lun Heng*, 1:330-31, 335, or the ambiguities throughout *Lixian zhuan* (Kaltenmark, *Lie-sien tchouan*).
12. See, for example, Wang Zhongshu, "Lun Wu-Jin shiqi de Foxiang kuifeng jing," *Kaogu*, 1985, no. 7, figs. 2, 4, 5. For an excellent summary of early Buddhist art in China and its ambiguities, see Chang Zong, "Zhongguo zaoqi Fojiao zaoxiang," *Meishu yanjiu*, 1988, no. 4:80-87; see also, Wu Hung, "Buddhist Elements in Early Chinese Art," *Artibus Asiae* 47 (1986): 263-376.
13. Yoshimura Rei, "Tennin no gogi to Chügoku no söki tennin-zö," *Ars Buddhica* 193 (November 1990): 73-90.
14. Clear evidence that the décor of Cave 257 was designed to appeal to Chinese viewers are the objects carried by two *apsarases* painted on the west wall: the messengers of a foreign faith claim legitimacy by their association with the sacred vessels. See Dunhuang wenwu yanjiu suo bian, *Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang mogao ku* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1982), 1:pl. 44. There are Northern Wei flying creatures in the Dunhuang caves that more closely resemble the Danyang images; however, they appear to postdate the southern reliefs. See, e.g., *Dunhuang mogao ku* 1:pls. 64 and 71 (Cave 437) and 83 (Cave 248).
15. The stele is now housed in the Shaanxi Provincial Museum in Xi'an. See *Wei Jin Nanbeichao diaosu* (vol. 3 of *Diaosu bian in Zhongguo meishu quanji*), 74-75, fig. 69. This stele warrants further and more comprehensive examination than it can receive here. I hope to deal more fully with its imagery in a future study.
16. Chang Zong, "Fojiao zaoxiang," 82.
17. Susan Bush, "Floral Motifs and Vine Scrolls in Chinese Art of the Late Fifth to Early Sixth Centuries A.D.," *Artibus Asiae* 38 (1976): 49-83.
18. Wu Hung, "Buddhist Elements"; Chang Zong, "Fojiao zaoxiang."
19. The absence of wings may well be an effect of Buddhist art, as are surely the lotus blossoms.
20. This is not to deny the important influence of Buddhism on Daoist beliefs. See, for example, E. Zürcher, "Buddhist Influence in Early Taoism," *T'oung Pao* 66, nos. 1-3: 84-147; Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "Stages of Transcendence: The *Bhumi* Concept in Taoist Scripture," in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1990), 119-47.
21. As is the style of the *apsarases* of the ex-voto.
22. Yoshimura Rei suggests that the standing image reproduced in fig. 19 may be a hare pounding elixir ("Tennin," 85); Wang Zhongshu describes it as a "feathered man" ("Wu-Jin shiqi de Foxiang," 7 and pl. 5).
23. See, e.g., *Nanjing liuchao muchutu wenwu xuanji* (Shanghai, 1957), fig. 25; *Zhongguo taoci: Yueyao* (Shanghai: Shanghai

- renmin meishu chubanshe, 1983), figs. 26, 36, 57, 63, 96. See also Wai-kam Ho, "Hun-p'ing: The Urn of the Soul," *Cleveland Museum of Art Bulletin* 48, no. 2 (February 1961): 26–34.
24. Yi Jiasheng, "Nanjing chutu de liuchao zaoqi qingci youxia-cai pankouhu," *Wenwu*, 1988, no. 6:72–75.
  25. Sun Zuoyun, "Luoyang Xi Han Bo Qianqiu bihua kaoshi," *Wenwu*, 1977, no. 6:21.
  26. Wu Hung, *The Wu Liang Shrine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 130 and figs. 41, 47, 48. See also Zeng Zhaoyu et al., *Yinan guhuaxiang shimu fajue baogao* (Shanghai: Wenwu chubanshe, 1956), pl. 65, fig. 54. For other possible botanical identifications, see, e.g., Needham, *Science and Civilisation* 5.2:122; Derk Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975): 275–76, 303.
  27. Compare, as another example, the Qi reliefs with an Eastern Han stone relief from Suining county, Jiangsu, in which a gaunt and angular transcendent turns at the waist and beckons to an oversized fowl (*Jiangsu Xuzhou Han huaxiangshi* [Beijing, 1959], fig. 19). The shapes of the Suining and Danyang figures are remarkably similar. Yet the analytical construction of the Suining image fails to convey the sense of motion so powerfully conveyed by the more synthetic construction of the Danyang figures. For discussion of the Suining composition and its analytic construction, see Martin J. Powers, *Art and Political Expression in Early China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 117–21.
  28. Liu Zhiyuan and Liu Tingbi, *Chengdu Wanfosi shike yishu* (Shanghai, 1958), fig. 31; Alexander Soper, "South Chinese Influence on the Buddhist Art of the Six Dynasties Period," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 32 (1960): 107 n. 243 and fig. 22; for the cautious date, Needham, *Science and Civilisation* 4.3:fig. 970. A small reproduction of the rubbing, captioned as A.D. 427, has appeared recently in *Wei Jin Nanbeichao diaosu* (p. 14); the elusive original is said to be in France.
  29. Translated by William R. B. Acker as "apsaras" (*Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954–74], 2.1:47; Chinese text, 2.2:69).
  30. *Nan shi*, by Li Yanshou (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), *juan* 5:53; Alexander C. Soper, *Textual Evidence for the Secular Arts of China in the Period from Liu Sung through Sui (A.D. 420–618)* (Ascona: Artibus Asiae, 1967), 19–20.
  31. For examples of Liu Song and Qi rulers' interest in both Buddhism and Daoism, see, for Buddhism, Alexander Coburn Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China* (Ascona: Artibus Asiae, 1959), 53, 54, 56, 58. For the same rulers' support of Daoism, see Anna Seidel, "Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments—Taoist Roots in the Apocrypha—," *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques* 21 (1983): 350–51. Many other examples could be cited. The Daoist and Buddhist interests of Shen Yue, mentioned below, are discussed in Richard B. Mather, *The Poet Shen Yüeh (441–513): The Reluctant Marquis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), chs. 6 and 7, respectively; see also p. 220 for his Daoist concerns at the approach of death.
  32. Anna Seidel, "Post-Mortem Immortality or: The Taoist Resurrection of the Body," in *Gilgul*, ed. S. Shaked, D. Schulman, and G. G. Stroumsa (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987), 225.
  33. Michel Strickmann, "On the Alchemy of T'ao Hung-ching," in *Facets of Taoism*, ed. Anna Seidel and Holmes Welch (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 123–92. For the Mao Shan sect, see also Strickmann, *Taoïsme du Mao chan*, *Mémoires de L'Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises* 17 (Paris, 1981) and "The Mao-shan Revelations; Taoism and the Aristocracy," *T'oung Pao* 63 (1977): 1–64; Isabelle Robinet, *La Révélation du Shangqing dans l'histoire du Taoïsme*, *Publications de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 137 (Paris, 1984). For the development of the Ling Bao sect during the same period, see Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "Sources of the Ling-Pao Scriptures," *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques* 21 (1983): 434–85.
  34. Pieces of jade, amber, agate, and rock crystal were found in one of the tombs. Some are beads or other ornaments; others, whose functions are not clear, may have been intended for the compounding of elixirs of immortality. See Nanjing bowuyuan, "Jiangsu Danyang Huqiao Nanchao damu ji zhuanke bihua," 47.
  35. For the Han-dynasty accounts of *Chisongzi*, see B. Karlgren, "Legends and Cults in Ancient China," *Bulletin of The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* (Östasiatiska Samlingarna) 18 (1946): 288. For a later account, see Kaltenmark, *Lie-sien tchouan*, 35–42. For Ge Hong's promise, *Baopuzi neipian*, *juan* 4:63. In re: another elixir, he notes, not very imaginatively, that the jade ladies will cook for you (*juan* 4:70).
  36. As merely one example, see *Zhengao*, *juan* 3:10b–11a, in the *Zhengtong Daozang* reproduction (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu, 1977), 34:27357–58. For an extended analysis of the *Shangqing* texts and their relation to third-century literature, see Robinet, *Révélation* 1, ch. 10.
  37. See n. 2. For the Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove see Donald Holzman, "Les Sept Sages de la Forêt des Bambous et la société de leur temps," *T'oung Pao* 4 (1956): 317–46. For interpretation and significance of the Seven Worthies murals, see Audrey Spiro, *Contemplating the Ancients: Aesthetic and Social Functions of Early Chinese Portraiture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990).
  38. For the propagation of Buddhism in the south, see E. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972).
  39. Cao Zhi's *laudatio* is published in *Caozi jianji* (Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1966), *juan* 7:3b. The E. Jin characterizations are from *Shishuo xinyu* [*jiaojian*], comp. Liu Yiqing (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), *juan* 14:28, 8.104, 14.30, and 14.29, respectively. Translations, with the same reference numbers, are by Richard B. Mather, *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World by Liu I-ch'ing, with commentary by Liu Chün* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976).
  40. Gu Huan's biography, including accounts of his prodigious learning and the gifts, is found in *Nan Qi shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), *juan* 54:928–36. For his important role in the Mao Shan lineage, see Strickmann, "Revelations," 31–34.
  41. Biography in *Liang shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), *juan* 1:742–43.



42. *Liang shu*, *juan* 1:743.
43. Richard B. Mather, "Shen Yüeh's Poems of Reclusion: From Total Withdrawal to Living in the Suburbs," *CLEAR* 5 (1983): 62-63.
44. Robinet, *Révélation* 1:ch. 11, esp. pp. 168 and ff.
45. Mather, *Shen Yüeh*, 116.
46. "Chisongzi jian," translation and accompanying Chinese text in Mather, *Shen Yüeh*, 112-13.
47. Donald Holzman, "Ts'ao Chih," *Asia Major*, 3d ser., 1, no. 1 (1988): 21.
48. *Baopuzi neipian*, *juan* 2:17.
49. Kaltenmark, *Lie-sien tchouan*, 35.
50. Pokora, "Huan T'an's Fu," 365, l. 10.
51. "Luoshen fu," *Caozi jianji*, *juan* 3.2a-4b.
52. "Poetical Essay on Living in the Suburbs," translation and Chinese text in Mather, *Shen Yüeh*, 195.
53. In 1960 Alexander Soper argued that southern Buddhist art forms were the models for the later Buddhist art of Northern Wei ("South Chinese Influence"). With only a few, much-damaged, southern remains at his disposal, Soper brilliantly marshalled a wealth of textual evidence to support his hypothesis. Years after the publication of that major contribution, the (non-Buddhist) Danyang celestials (as well as other non-Buddhist finds such as the Seven Worthies' murals) have emerged as important visual confirmation of his general argument.  
The connection between these later finds and the Buddhist art of the north has since been noted and argued many times; Soper's wheel, with appropriate rearrangement of a few spokes, has been reinvented more than once. See Su Bai, "Rakuyō chihō ni okeru Hokuchōki sekkutsu no shohoteki kōsatsu," in *Ryūmon sekkutsu* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1987-88), 1:233-34; Duan Wenjie, "Feitian—Gantapo yu Jiunaluo—zaitan Dunhuang feitian," *Dunhuang yanjiu*, 1987, no. 1:1-13; Hinako Ishimatsu, "Ryūmon Koyotō shoki zōzō ni okeru Chūgoku-ka mondai," *Ars Buddhica*, no. 184 (May 1989): 49-67; Yoshimura Rei, "Nanbokuchō butsuzō yōshiki shiron," *Kokka*, no. 1066 (1983): 5-18; Yoshimura Rei, "Ryūmon yōshiki Nancho kigen ron," *Kokka*, no. 1121 (1989): 7-18.  
For important studies utilizing other southern finds to demonstrate the linkages between southern and northern styles of religious and funerary art, see the following articles by Susan Bush: "Thunder Monsters, Auspicious Animals, and Floral Ornament," *Ars Orientalis* 10 (1975): 19-33; "Thunder Monsters and Wind Spirits in Early Sixth Century China and the Epitaph Tablet of Lady Yuan," *Boston Museum Bulletin* 72 (1974): 25-54; "Floral Motifs and Vine Scrolls" (see n. 17).
54. For a study of Cave 249, see Judy Chungwa Ho, "Tunhuang Cave 249: A Representation of the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa" (Ph. D. diss., Yale University, 1985).

## Glossary

Baopuzi	抱朴子
Cao	曹
Cao Zhi	曹植
Chisongzi	赤松子
Dong Wang Gong	東王公
Dunhuang	敦煌
<i>fan fan hu/lan lan hu</i>	汜汜乎/濫濫乎
<i>fangshi</i>	方士
<i>feixian</i>	飛仙
<i>fu</i>	賦
Fufei	宓妃
Ge Hong	葛洪
Gu Huan	顧歡
Gu Kaizhi	顧愷之
<i>handan</i>	寒丹
<i>Huainanzi</i>	淮南子
Huan Tan	桓譚
Li Yanshou	李延壽
<i>Liexian zhuan</i>	列仙傳
Ling Bao	靈寶
<i>lingshang</i>	令上
Longmen	龍門
<i>Lun Heng</i>	論衡
Mao Shan	茅山
<i>qin</i>	琴
Rong Qiji	榮啓期
Ruan Ji	阮籍
Shangqing	上清
<i>Shangqing jing</i>	上清經
<i>shen</i>	神

<i>shenxian</i>	神仙	<i>xian</i>	仙
Shen Yue	沈約	<i>xianren</i>	仙人
<i>Taiqing</i>	太清	Xiao	蕭
Tao Hongjing	陶弘景	Xiao Baojuan	蕭寶卷
<i>tiannu</i>	天女	Xiao Baorong	蕭寶融
<i>tianren</i>	天人	Xiao Changmao	蕭長懋
Wanfosi	萬佛寺	Xiao Daosheng	蕭道生
Wang Meng	王濛	Xie Shang	謝尚
Wang Shao	王劭	Xiu'anling	修安陵
Wang Xizhi	王羲之	Xu Mai	許邁
Wenhui	文惠	Yungang	雲岡
<i>wenren</i>	文人	Zhang Yanyuan	張彥遠
Xi Kang	嵇康	Zhi Dun	支遁
Xi Wang Mu	西王母	<i>zhu</i>	朮





# THE TRANSFORMATION OF ARABIC WRITING: PART I, QUR'ĀNIC CALLIGRAPHY

By YASSER TABBAA

THE CONVERSION OF QUR'ĀNIC AND MONUMENTAL CALLIGRAPHY from angular to cursive is one of the most important but least discussed developments in Islamic art. Occurring first in Qur'ān manuscripts in the tenth century and later in monumental inscriptions, this transformation had a deep and long-lasting impact, shaping the subsequent evolution of Islamic calligraphy for several centuries. It was also a geographically widespread change, and although it began in the central Islamic world—most likely in Baghdad—no Muslim country from India to Spain was left unaffected by it.

A development of this magnitude, occurring in the most visible medium of Islamic art, requires an explanation. Furthermore, in view of the fact that in the medieval Islamic world calligraphy fulfilled a central iconographic function (as the transmitter of pietistic messages and political propaganda), this explanation cannot be restricted to the mere formal alteration of the script but must reach to the underlying cultural factors that would have made such a change necessary. The following paper will therefore attempt to address both formal and iconographic aspects of this transformation as they apply to Qur'ān manuscripts. Since the change in monumental epigraphy lagged by about one century behind the Qur'ānic transformation and was contingent upon it, it seems logical to proceed chronologically from Qur'ān manuscripts to monuments, which will be discussed in a subsequent article.

Given the central importance of this problem, why has it attracted so little attention among specialists in Arabic manuscripts and monumental inscriptions? It is certainly not for lack of diligence and creativity: specialists in these areas have, over the last century and a half, examined countless manuscripts and fragments and documented nearly all the important monumental inscriptions in the Islamic world. In the process they have laid the foundations of the two fields of paleography and epigraphy, which today are among the most developed fields in Islamic studies. Instead it seems that the main reason for this neglect is methodological, emanating from the specialized approaches and rather inflexible agendas prevailing in epigraphy and paleography.

Research in Islamic epigraphy has generally been restricted to the recording and translation of inscriptions on monuments and art objects, and somewhat

later to their interpretation.<sup>1</sup> Little attention has been given to calligraphic form, whose relevance to the very specialized endeavor of the first epigraphers was not at all perceived. While this is understandable given the enormous scope of epigraphic documentation and the outline format of its early publications, the dismissal of the formal qualities of the script is far more problematic in the recent works of art historians who have used epigraphy as an interpretive tool.<sup>2</sup> By simply perpetuating the restrictive methodology of the first epigraphers, they have generally reduced calligraphy to mere information, thus diminishing the artistic meaning and visual impact of inscriptions instead of enriching them.<sup>3</sup>

The analysis of the formal qualities of scripts has traditionally fallen in the domain of paleography, although in recent years a number of art historians have also made important contributions toward charting the course of Arabic calligraphy and distinguishing its many varieties. But, with rare exceptions, these writers have been disinclined to consider the reasons behind changes in calligraphic form.<sup>4</sup> Instead of searching for underlying cultural causes, most writers on calligraphy have tended to explain the great developments in Arabic and Persian scripts in terms of regional variation, autonomous chronological change, or artisanal improvements determined primarily by the innovations of a few well-known calligraphers and the lesser contributions of minor calligraphers.<sup>5</sup>

This overly specialized approach is problematic in at least two respects. First, in its emphasis on authenticating the works of the most important calligraphers and its dismissal, or at least negative evaluation, of all "questionable" specimens, it has tended to lose sight of the broad artistic trends of the period and even of the legacy of the calligrapher under consideration. This is especially troublesome in the case of Ibn Muqla, of whose calligraphy no specimens have survived but whose method is known to have influenced one or two generations of calligraphers. Second, traditional paleography has left unexamined the impact of external factors, such as politics and religion, on the world of the calligrapher—factors that may have directly or indirectly contributed to paleographic changes.<sup>6</sup> Just as the specialized approach of epigraphers limited them to the content of the inscriptions, so the approach of paleographers has restricted them to problems of dating, provenance, and authorship.



The question of the transformation of Arabic writing, though closely related to both epigraphy and paleography, seems to fall in a methodological middle ground between the two disciplines. Being equally concerned with the formal and semiological aspects of this transformation, this paper and its sequel will draw on the findings of both epigraphers and paleographers while at the same time charting an entirely new course. More than anything, the paper will attempt to examine the various dimensions of the relationship between the form(s) and meaning(s) of certain new calligraphic styles: how and why these new forms were created; how and why meanings were ascribed to them; and what religious or political requirements these meaningful forms were intended to address.<sup>7</sup>

We begin, therefore, by examining the formal qualities of the new Qur'anic calligraphy produced by and under the influence of Ibn Muqla and Ibn al-Bawwāb, basing our investigation on a fairly large number of manuscripts culled from several American, European, and Middle Eastern libraries.<sup>8</sup> We proceed next to investigate a number of factors that may have contributed to this transformation, including the gradual replacement of vellum by paper; the wide application of geometric principles to Islamic art, including calligraphy; and finally the attempts to create a canonical recension of the Qur'ān in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Methodologically, this paper follows a tradition perhaps first established by Nabia Abbott, whereby evidence derived from the paleographic analysis of Qur'anic manuscripts and fragments is juxtaposed against a wide variety of literary sources.<sup>9</sup> Although Abbott's work has enjoyed widespread influence, it should be noted that two recent writers on Qur'anic paleography have taken exception to her textual approach on two entirely different grounds. Estelle Whelan has correctly questioned Abbott's reliance on secretarial manuals for the identification of Qur'anic scripts, suggesting that this undermines the usefulness of her conclusions for the study of extant manuscripts.<sup>10</sup> Yet despite this methodological flaw, Whelan reaffirms in her conclusion the importance of a comprehensive approach to the material, one that takes into account "paleographical, codicological, textual, and ornamental" criteria.<sup>11</sup>

Déroche, on the other hand, having voiced some objections about the "relatively modest" impact of Abbott's method on paleography, nearly dismisses the literary sources and bases his entire investigation on the close examination of large collections of Qur'ān manuscripts.<sup>12</sup> While the thoroughness and meticulous care of his approach are indeed admirable, the

absence of the cultural backdrop, which in the case of calligraphy is quite elaborate, casts some doubt on his detailed classifications and formalist schemes. At best, such an ahistorical approach may be convenient for purposes of taxonomy and classification, but it falls far too short when one attempts to deal with problems of change and transformation in calligraphic styles—problems that have long been identified by the writers on calligraphic and scribal arts.

What seems needed, therefore, is not to silence these sources but to utilize them with a greater sense of purpose and focus than Abbott or others have. Despite their often ambiguous statements, impressionistic ideas, and incomplete schemes, these texts can nevertheless provide an adequate framework for posing questions to the available specimens. Most researchers in Islamic art agree that all these sources have their limitations and are often silent about matters that seem to us of the greatest importance.<sup>13</sup> The challenge, then, is to establish links among these specialized sources and between them and the works of art in the hope of composing a reasonably coherent picture of a particular cultural or artistic phenomenon. While such a reconstruction may remain incomplete and may even lack the apparent authority of positivist classification, the juxtaposition and interlinking of a variety of texts, including the artistic one, will ultimately enrich the cultural discourse and enhance our experience of its various facets. Often in Islamic art, that is the most one could wish for.

### *Before Ibn Muqla*

Our attempt to present the transformation of Arabic writing in the fourth and fifth centuries A.H. is made infinitely easier by the substantial paleographic research on the first three centuries of Islam. The main points of this body of research that are relevant to this paper can be summarized as follows. First, cursive Arabic writing did not originate from an older angular script, but rather the two forms coexisted from the earliest days of Islam (fig. 1).<sup>14</sup> Second, the early cursive scripts were used exclusively for secular purposes, *never* for the Qur'ān, which was written in the angular Kūfic script (fig. 2).<sup>15</sup> Third, secular and Qur'anic scripts were subject to totally different calligraphic rules, those applied to the Qur'ān being far more exacting.<sup>16</sup> And finally, most treatises on calligraphy dealt with secular not Qur'anic scripts since their authors tended to be scribes and officials of the administration.<sup>17</sup>

With few exceptions, Qur'anic script from the first two and a half centuries of Islam is extremely

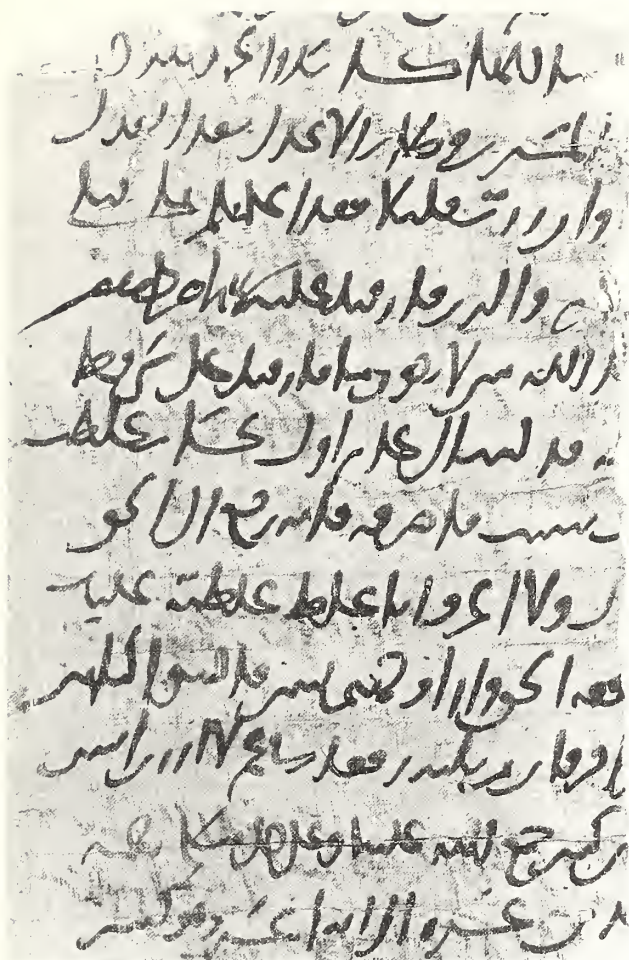


FIG. 1. Papyrus fragment, Egypt, third/ninth century.  
Ann Arbor, Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, 67.1.52.

uniform, a fact that Arthur Arberry attributed to "the tenacious conservatism of many Koranic scribes."<sup>18</sup> There is in fact so little variation in the Kūfic script of these Qur'āns that paleographers have had to depend on diacritical and orthographic marks and decorations for their dating and classification.<sup>19</sup> In contrast, judging from the literary sources and the few preserved specimens, secular scripts exhibited far greater variety.<sup>20</sup> By the end of the ninth century Ibn al-Nadīm had listed twenty-six styles ranging from large and angular to small and cursive.<sup>21</sup>

Indeed, such a large number of these "secular" scripts existed by the end of the ninth century that Ibn Wahb al-Kātib, a contemporary of Ibn al-Nadīm, complained that "the scribes were no longer aware of all the different styles of the olden days."<sup>22</sup> Nabia Abbott maintained that many of these scripts represented subtle variations on the major scripts,<sup>23</sup> but their sheer number and the subsequent need for reform suggest a loss of standard and a general decline in scribal writing.

#### *Ibn Muqla and his Circle of Influence*

Thus, on the eve of the reforms of Ibn Muqla (886–940), Arabic was being written in a standard Qur'ānic script that only a select few copyists (*muḥarrirūn*) had mastered and in an unwieldy variety of secular scripts, many of inferior quality and none following an established standard (table

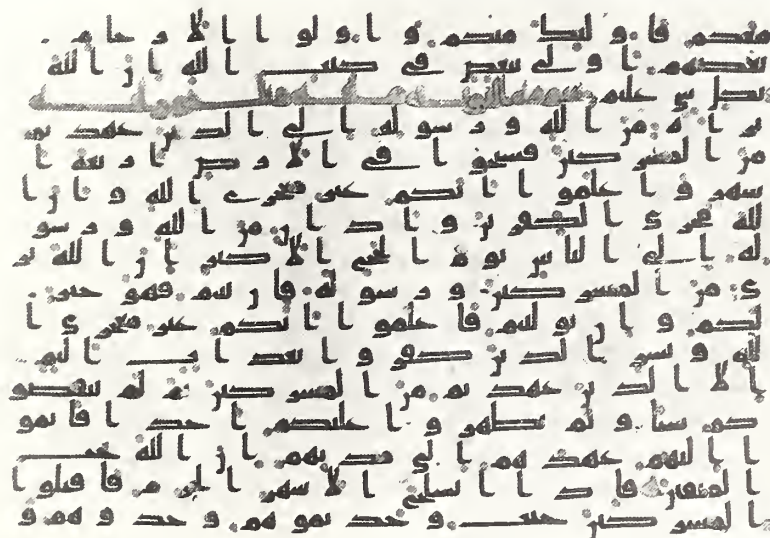


FIG. 2. Page of Qur'ān, Iraq/Iran, third/ninth century. Tehran, Iran Bastan Museum, 4251.



1).<sup>24</sup> It has been firmly established that, contrary to legend, Ibn Muqla did not create any new scripts and certainly was not the inventor of cursive writing, incorrectly referred to today as the *naskh* script.<sup>25</sup> Known primarily as *ṣāhib al-khaṭṭ al-mansūb* (master of the proportioned script), Ibn Muqla gained fame chiefly for inventing a system of proportional writing based on the principles of geometric design (*ḥandasat al-ḥurūf*).<sup>26</sup> Some idea of the geometric quality of his script may be derived from the laudatory remarks of the tenth-century writer Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī: "Ibn Muqla is a prophet in the field of writing. It was poured upon his hand, even as it was revealed to the bees to make their honey-cells hexagonal."<sup>27</sup>

Ibn Muqla's rules of proportion were not intended for Qur'ānic Kūfic but for the large variety of scribal scripts. In other words, Qur'ānic Kūfic, which by the tenth century had reached a very high standard, was not directly affected by the changes of Ibn Muqla; the reform was at first intended for the more mundane scripts. The result of these reforms, therefore, was not the gradual softening of the angular Kūfic script but

its supplantation by the redesigned scripts of the chancery. I will return to this important point below.

The system of proportion that Ibn Muqla devised was based on measurement by dots. The dot was formed by pressing the nib of the *qalam* (reed pen) on paper until it opened to its fullest extent, after which it was released evenly and rapidly. This produced a square on edge, or a rhombus. The size of the dot affected only the size of the writing; the relative proportions of letters remained constant for each individual script. Placing dots vertex to vertex, Ibn Muqla then proceeded to straighten the Kūfic *alif*, which had been bent to the right, and adopt it as his standard of measurement (fig. 3). His next step was to standardize the individual letters of the various corrupted secular scripts by bringing them into accord with geometric figures. By giving each letter a proportional relation (*nisba*) to the *alif*, Ibn Muqla was able to construct a canon of proportions for the entire alphabet.<sup>28</sup> This allowed the creation of a number of systematic methods or templates for each of the major scripts, which henceforth could be produced accurately to scale.

This standardization came at a price: a relatively small number of scripts was admitted into the canon of reformed scripts, while others were neglected and gradually slipped into oblivion (table 1). The canonical scripts, known collectively as *al-aqlām al-sitta* or *shish qalam*, were *thuluth*, *naskh*, *muḥaqqaq*, *riqāʿ*, *lawqīʿ*, and *rayḥān*. Of these scripts *thuluth* was to attain the greatest importance in view of its nearly exclusive use for monumental inscriptions and for *sūra* headings in the Qur'ān. *Naskh*, originally a minor and somewhat disdained script, became the preferred style for literary manuscripts and small Qur'āns, especially during the Ottoman period. *Muḥaqqaq* and *rayḥān* achieved the peak of their fame in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when they were used for writing the splendid Mamlūk and Mongol Qur'āns, the former script for large copies and the latter for smaller ones. *Riqāʿ* was employed for correspondence, while the use of *lawqīʿ* was restricted to royal decrees and official letters.<sup>29</sup>

Although the name of Ibn Muqla is second to none in the history of Islamic calligraphy, no authentic specimen in his hand has been found. Some specimens bearing his name have at different times been suggested as authentic, but all of these have ultimately been dismissed as forgeries.<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, in their zeal to authenticate works by Ibn Muqla, paleographers may have dismissed certain evidence that, though of no particular use in finding definitive specimens by him, may help us to approximate the appearance of his calligraphy and therefore determine

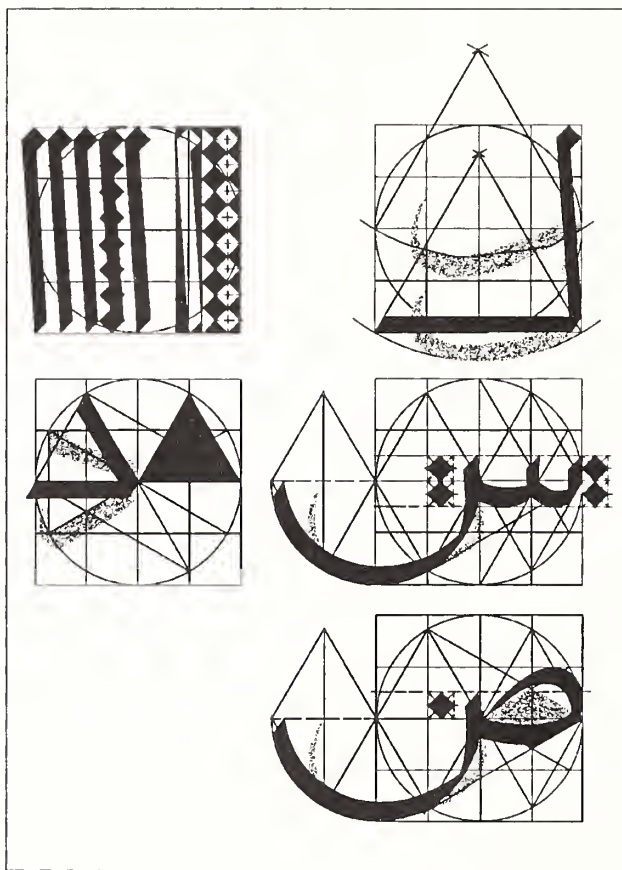
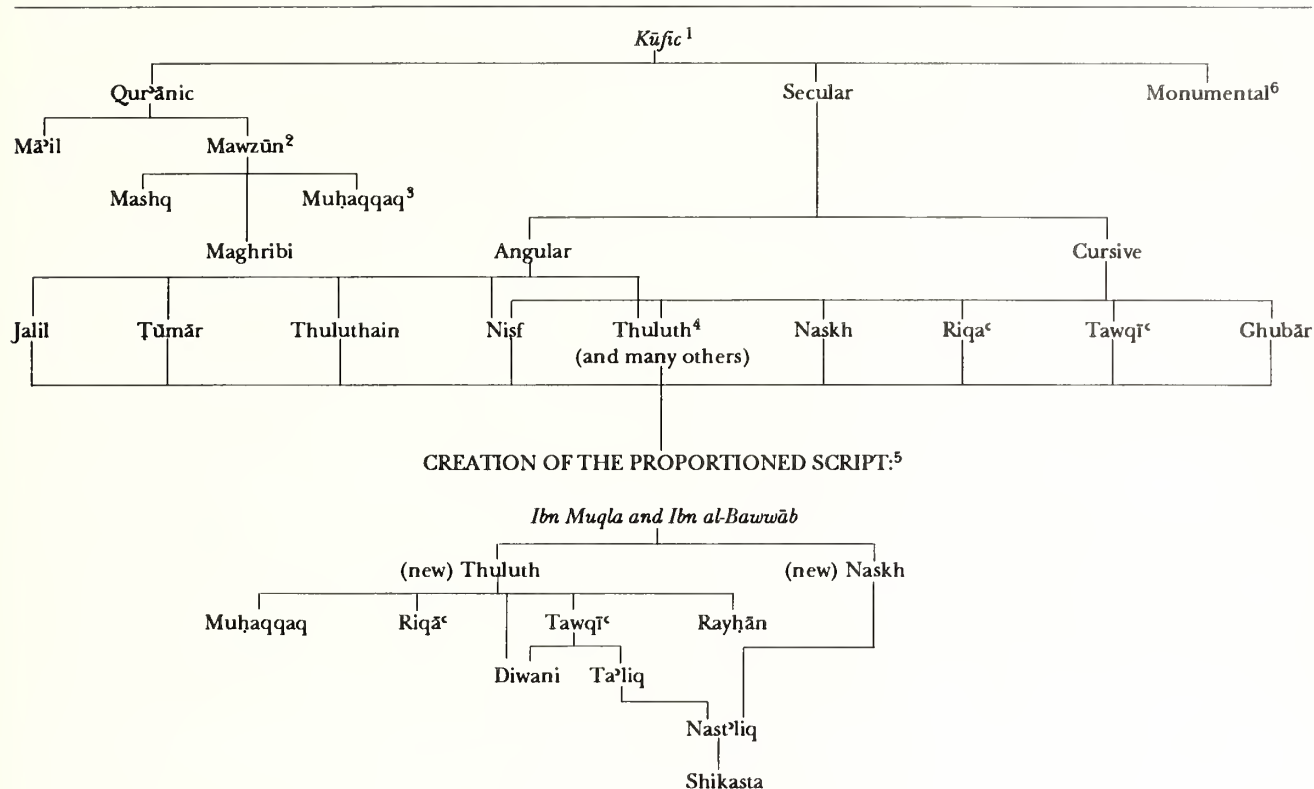


FIG. 3. Reconstruction of the method of Ibn Muqla:  
letters *alif*, *lām*, *sīn*, *dāl*, *ṣād*.

After Soucek, "Islamic Calligraphy," from Ahmad Muṣṭafa.

TABLE 1. Development of Arabic Calligraphic Scripts



1. "Kūfic" is used here in its original sense as the mother script of all later Arabic scripts. According to Qalqashandi and others (see n. 15) Kūfic has two basic terminal features, flatness (*baṣṭ*) and concaveness (*taqwīr*), such that all calligraphic scripts derived from it contain these properties in specific proportions. As a rule, the larger scripts such as *tūmār* are flat and angular and the smaller scripts such as *tawqīʿ* and *ghubār* are concave and cursive, while the middle scripts such as *nisf* and *thuluth* combine the two features in characteristic proportions.

2. The distinction between *māʾil* and *mawzūn* has been suggested by Yousuf Thannoun in "Khaṭṭ al-thuluth wa marājiʿ al-fann al-Islāmi," unpublished conference paper in "The Common Themes and Principles of Islamic Art," Yıldız Palace, Istanbul, 1985.

3. *Muḥaqqaq* occurs as a variety of Qurʾānic Kūfic in Ibn al-Nadīm. See Abbott, "Arabic Paelography," table 1 and p. 79. I have distinguished it here from two other primary types of Qurʾānic

Kūfic, *mashq* and *maghribi*. The same term is employed again for a fully cursive script first used in the early thirteenth century. Although the scripts have nothing in common, the term *muḥaqqaq* (verified) seems to refer to Qurʾānic script of especially high quality.

4. Such scripts as *thuluth*, *naskh*, *riqāʿ*, and *tawqīʿ* have pre-reform and post-reform existences. Their post-reform appearance is well known although their original form, with the possible exception of *naskh*, is likely to remain a mystery.

5. The table conflates the accomplishments of Ibn Muqla and Ibn al-Bawwāb. It should be noted, however, that what I have chosen to call semi-Kūfic, or the script influenced by Ibn Muqla, may in fact represent a number of related scripts.

6. To be discussed in Part II.

the extent of his influence. This evidence can be summarized under two headings: the method of Ibn Muqla as described in his own treatise *Risālah fi l-khaṭṭ al-mansūb* (Treatise on proportioned writing) and the specimens that have been spuriously attributed to Ibn Muqla.

Given Ibn Muqla's far greater fame as the innovator of a method than as a calligrapher, the obsessive search for authentic specimens in his hand may have been misguided. Those efforts could perhaps have

been more fruitfully spent in examining Qurʾānic manuscripts that postdate him but may have been influenced by his method. By comparing samples of such manuscripts with the reconstructed alphabet of Ibn Muqla, we may be able to establish the circle of influence of his method.<sup>31</sup> Following the instructions given in the *Risālah*, Nabia Abbott, and more recently Aḥmad Muṣṭafa,<sup>32</sup> have obtained a script characterized by regularity, verticality, semiangularity, short sublineal curves, and the triangular appearance of



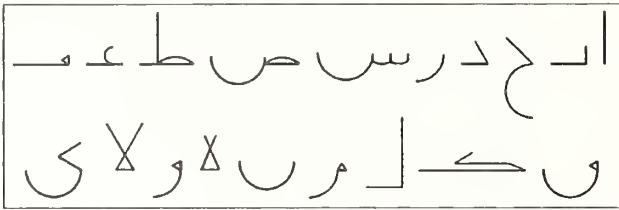


FIG. 4. Tentative reconstruction of Arabic letter forms according to Ibn Muqla. After Abbott, *Rise*, fig. 1.

some of the characters (fig. 4). Its *alifs* are pointed and almost vertical and its knots always open. In all these respects, this reconstructed script resembles the so-called semi-Kūfic script<sup>33</sup> used in many tenth- and eleventh-century Qurʾāns.<sup>34</sup> Some specimens of this script are so regular as to be somewhat rigid, which might be seen as the result of strict adherence to the geometric precepts of Ibn Muqla.

A second kind of evidence comes from Qurʾānic fragments and album pages that have been spuriously attributed to Ibn Muqla (fig. 5). Although certainly not in his hand and often written two or three centuries after him, these manuscripts nevertheless display

striking similarities both to one another and to the group of semi-Kūfic Qurʾāns mentioned above.<sup>35</sup> Such consistency is significant even in forgeries, for a forger after all has to pay due respect to the original he is copying. In this case, there is no doubt whatsoever that what is being copied is an especially precise form of the semi-Kūfic script. For these reasons, it seems quite likely that semi-Kūfic Qurʾāns—which immediately follow Ibn Muqla—are written in a style that resembles his, at first perhaps by calligraphers who were directly under his guidance.

Within the body of Qurʾānic manuscripts, semi-Kūfic Qurʾāns form a fairly distinct group sharing a number of features. In terms of their date, these manuscripts tend to cluster from the late tenth century to about 1100 (figs. 10 and 16), although the script continued to be used and further evolved in eastern Iran up to the end of the twelfth century and even later.<sup>36</sup> The few examples that have been suggested from the first half of the tenth century are quite different from regular semi-Kūfic. Of these the earliest is perhaps CBL 1417, which consists of four small *juz*'s of a single Qurʾān on vellum, dated to 292/905 and signed by Aḥmad ibn Abī'l-Qāsim al-Khāyqānī

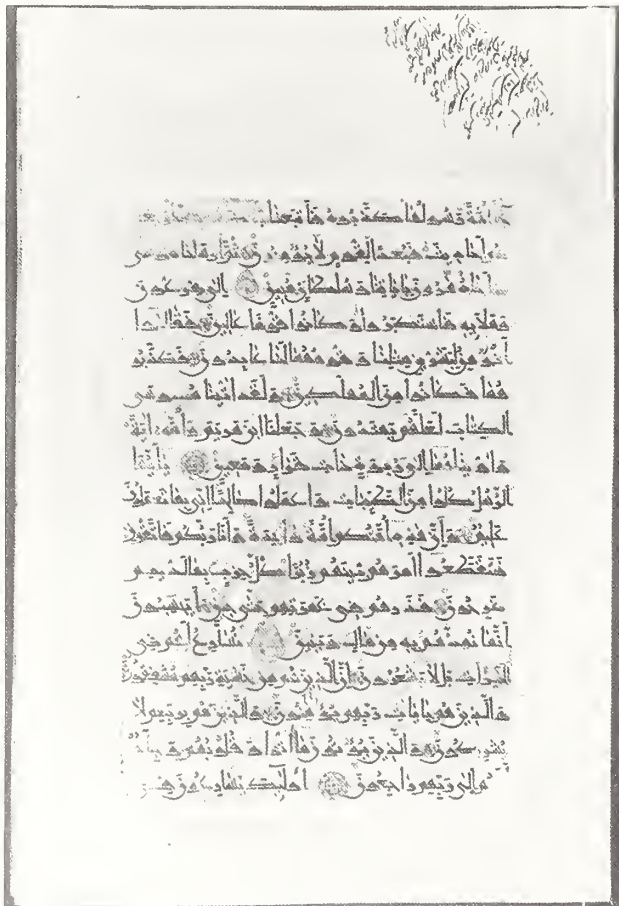


FIG. 5. Qurʾān fragment on paper, Iran, twelfth century. Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, Ms. Add.

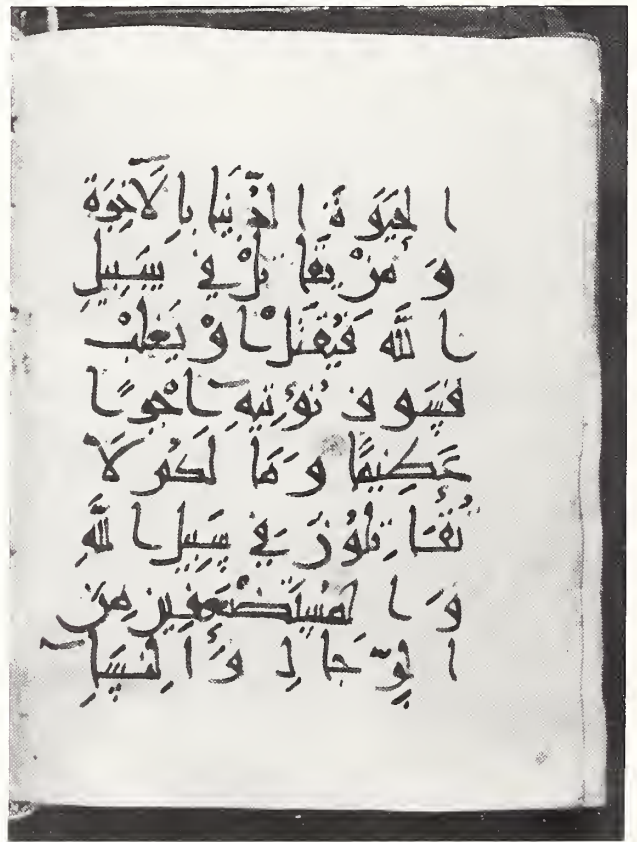


FIG. 6. *Juz*' of Qurʾān on vellum, Iran, Shaʿbān 292/June 905, signed Aḥmad ibn Abī'l-Qāsim al-Khāyqānī. Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, 1417, f. 15b.

(fig. 6). James suggested that it was “one of the earliest Eastern Kūfic manuscripts,”<sup>37</sup> and Déroche<sup>38</sup> compared it with BN 382 and TIM 12800, which are dated 325/936–37. But the script in all these manuscripts, though somewhat cursive, is quite irregular, resembling contemporary secular manuscripts such as CBL 3494 (dated 279/892) more than semi-Kūfic Qur’āns.<sup>39</sup> In fact the loose form of many of the letters, especially the *alif* with a pronounced hook to the right, shows no sign of having been influenced by the conventions of Ibn Muqla.<sup>40</sup>

Eliminating these problematic fragments from our sample, we may then proceed to outline the prominent features of semi-Kūfic manuscripts. With consistently clear letter forms and distinct words separated by spaces on either side—instead of the previous practice of dramatically scattering word fragments across the line—the most striking feature of the semi-Kūfic script is its legibility, especially when compared to the preceding Abbasid Kūfic script (cf. figs. 2 and 10). This legibility is further enhanced by a clear and often complete system of orthography and vocalization. The old system of using large colored dots for vocalization and groups of black dots for orthographic marks was abandoned in a two-step fashion:<sup>41</sup> First,

the orthographic dots were standardized and made smaller (fig. 8), and second, a totally new system of vocalization was introduced, consisting of slashes for *fatḥa* and *kasra*, a small *waw* for *dhamma*, a small circle for *sukūn*, and other signs for *shadda* and *madda* (figs. 14 and 17).<sup>42</sup> This is the system still in use today.

The semi-Kūfic script is also remarkable for its consistency and regularity, as demonstrated by numerous fragmentary and complete Qur’āns in European and Middle Eastern libraries.<sup>43</sup> It appears generally as a small and rather compact script with very simple letter forms and crisp, angular ligatures. The uprights are nearly vertical although the *alif* can vary from being slightly bent to the right to being perfectly straight (cf. figs. 16 and 18). The “eyes” of the letters *ṣād*, *ṭā*, *‘ayn*, *qāf*, *mīm*, and *hā* are always open and have a generally triangular appearance. An exercise in the art of restraint, it has neither the deep sublineal curves of Maghribi Kūfic nor the flourishes of later cursive writing. In fact, most examples seem to follow rather closely the method of Ibn Muqla, although divergences begin to occur from the second half of the eleventh century with the widespread use of the so-called Eastern Kūfic (fig. 7).<sup>44</sup>

In addition to their distinctive and legible script,

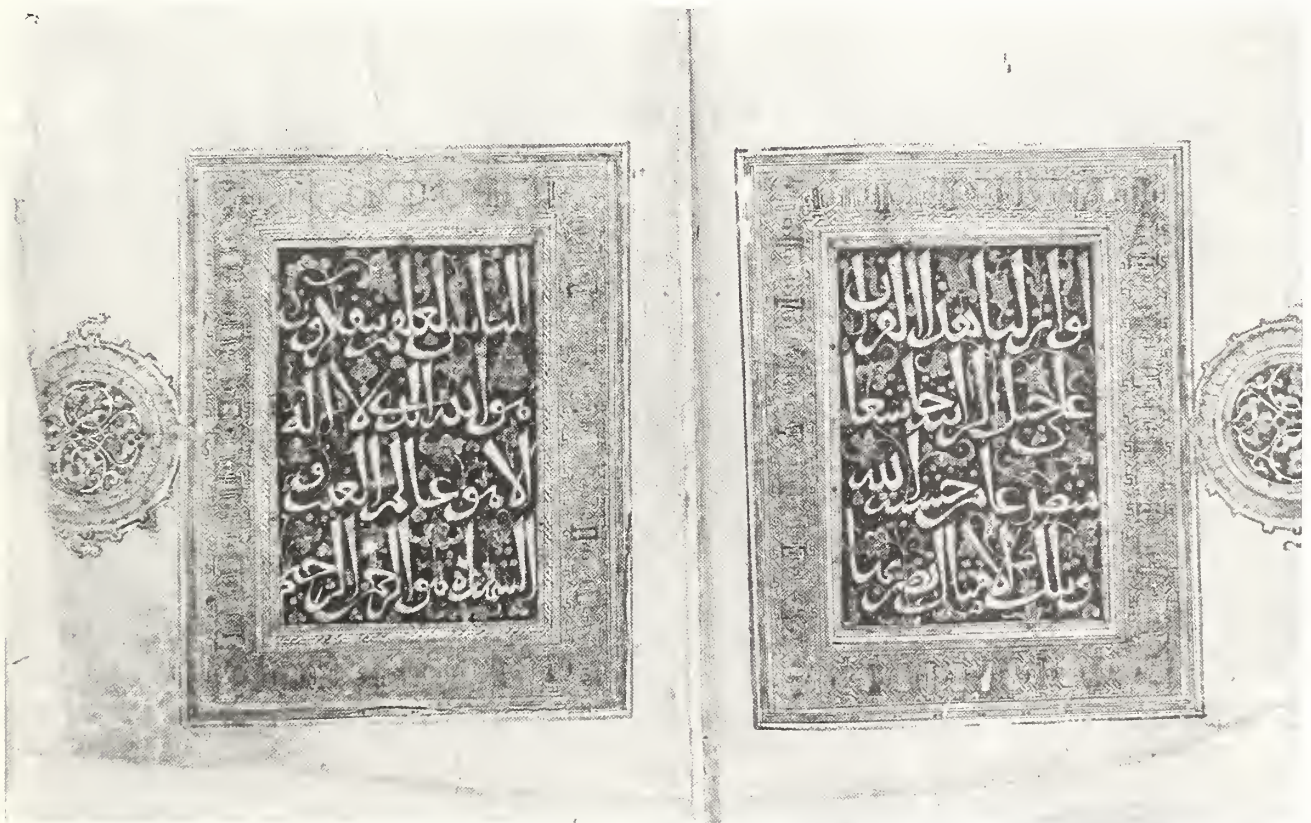


FIG. 7. Eastern Kūfic Qur’ān on paper, Afghanistan, dated 573/1177, signed Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn ‘Aballah al-Ghaznawī. Istanbul, Topkapı Saray Library, EH 42, ff. 1b and 2a.

See correction in vol. 2, p. 117



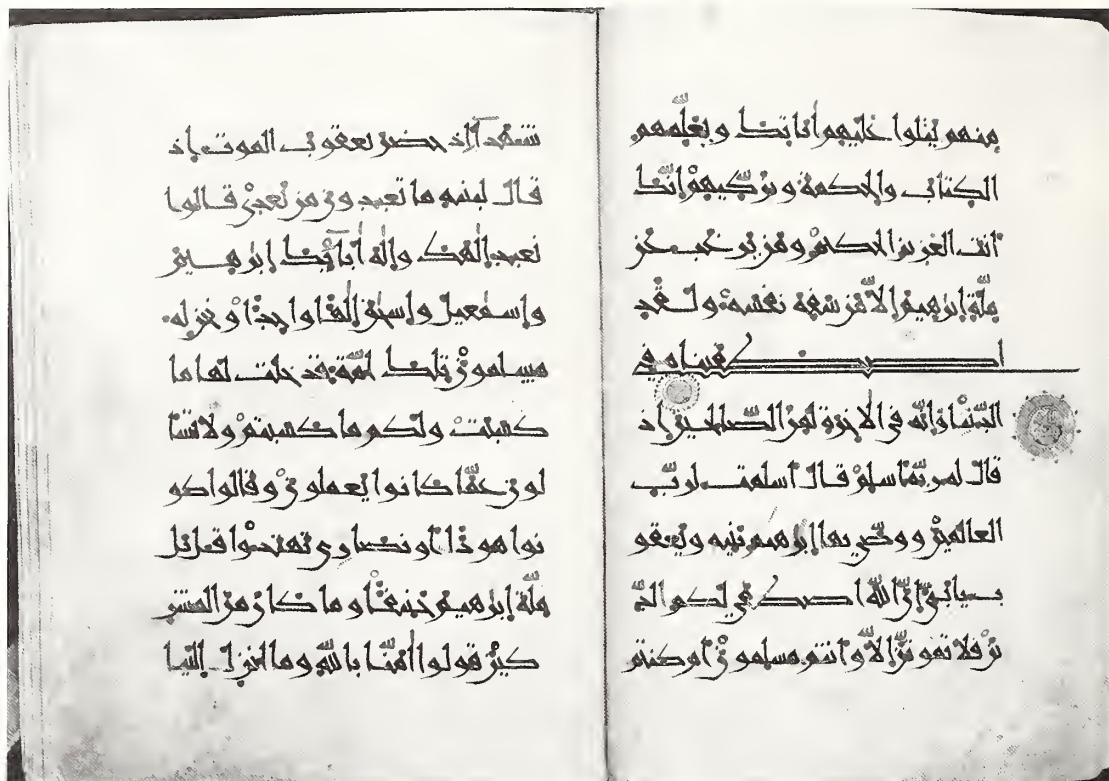


Fig. 8. Large fragment (first quarter) of Qur'ān, Iran, other parts of same ms. dated 361/972.  
Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, 1434, ff. 22b and 23a.

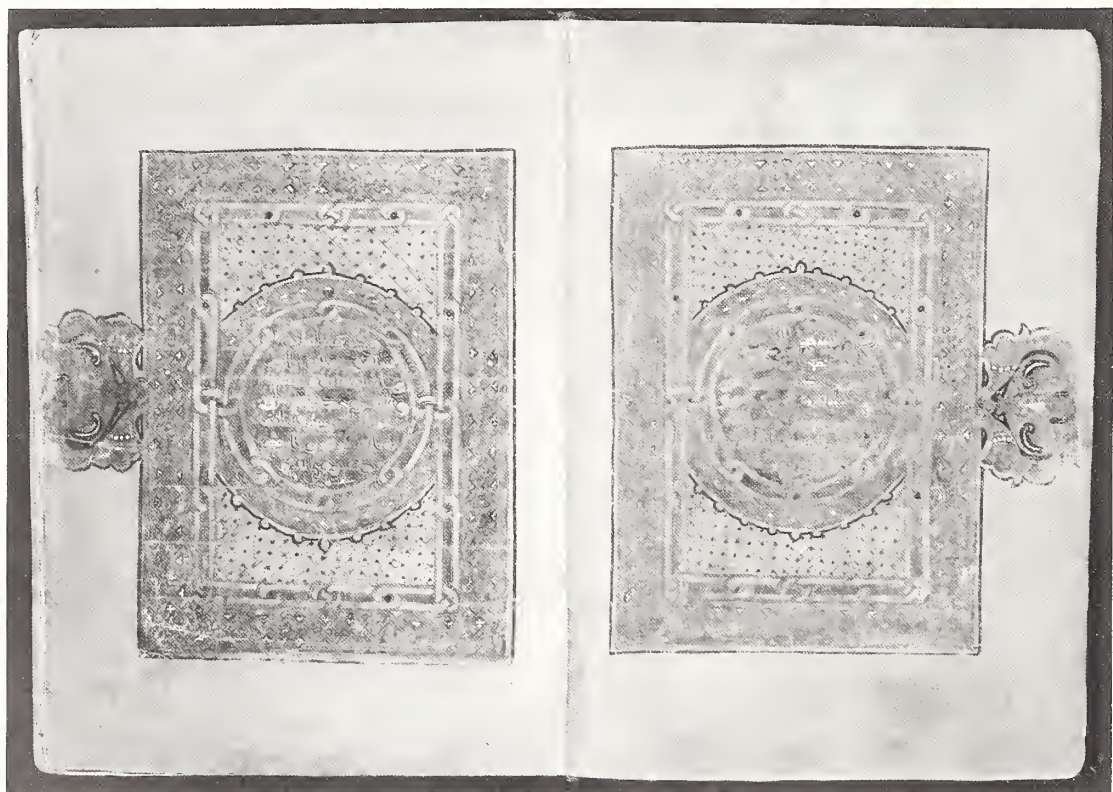


Fig. 9. Verse count. Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, 1434, ff. 1b and 2a.

TABLE 2. Semi-Kūfic Qurʾāns, Tenth-Eleventh Centuries

<i>manuscript</i>	<i>medium</i>	<i>place and date</i>	<i>verse count</i>	<i>fig. nos.</i>
CBL 1434 ( <i>juzʿ</i> )	paper	Iran 972	on ff. 1b, 2a	8, 9
TKS HS 22 (1/4 Qurʾān)	paper	Iraq/Iran 998	none in section	10, 11
BL 11,735 ( <i>juzʿ</i> )	vellum	Iraq/Iran late 10th century	on f. 1a; 1st part missing	12, 13
TKS R-38 (complete)	vellum	Iraq/Iran late 10th century	on f. 317b; 1st part missing	14, 15
TKS Y-752 (complete)	paper	Iraq/Iran 1004-5	none	16, 17
BL Or. 12884 (complete)	paper	Iraq/Iran mid 11th century	none	
MMA 45.10 and 40.164 2a-b (detached folios)	paper	Iran/Afghanistan	detailed count before each <i>āyah</i>	18
TKS R-10 (complete)	paper	Iran 11th century	on f. 235a; 1st part missing	19

Kūfic script. This is CBL 1434 (figs. 8 and 9), a large fragment of a manuscript, portions of which also exist at the Ardabil Shrine and the University Library in Istanbul (A 6758), whose section is dated 361/972 and signed by ‘Alī ibn Shādhān al-Rāzī (of Rayy).<sup>47</sup>

The second is that these semi-Kūfic Qurʾāns abandon the horizontal format of Abbasid Kūfic and adopt the vertical format that had been used previously in

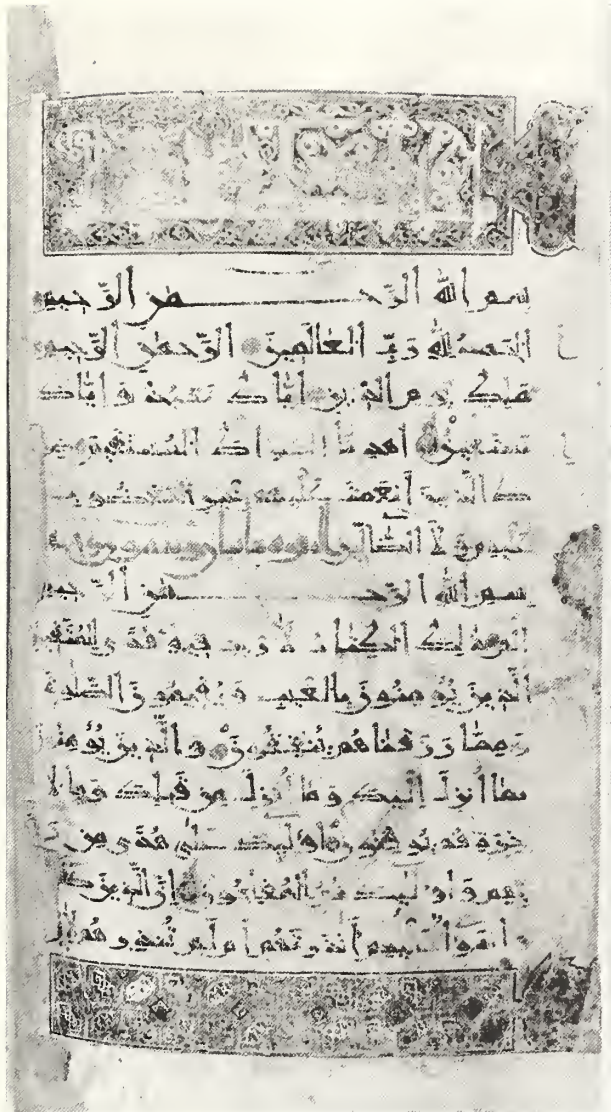


FIG. 10. Semi-Kūfic Qurʾān on paper, Iran, 388/998. Istanbul, Topkapı Saray Library, HS 22, f. 2b.

semi-Kūfic Qurʾāns display at least three other features that distinguish them from their predecessors. The first is that they are almost all written on paper instead of vellum (table 2). Out of our sample of eight manuscripts, two (BL 11, 735 and TKS R-38; figs 12 and 15) use vellum and the rest paper. Statistical information on the percentage of the use of vellum in semi-Kūfic or Eastern Kūfic Qurʾān manuscripts is still unavailable, but the present investigation suggests something under 20 percent. Although paper began to be used for secular manuscripts sometime in the late ninth century,<sup>45</sup> these are the earliest Qurʾāns written on paper and represent the transition from Kūfic Qurʾāns on parchment to fully cursive Qurʾāns on paper.<sup>46</sup> In fact the earliest known dated paper Qurʾān is written in a very upright and regular semi-

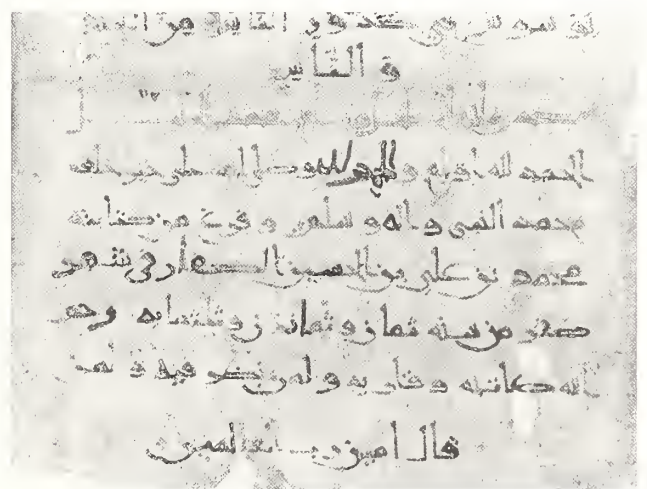


FIG. 11. Colophon, dated 388/998, signed Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Saffār. Istanbul, Topkapı Saray Library, HS 22, f. 257b.



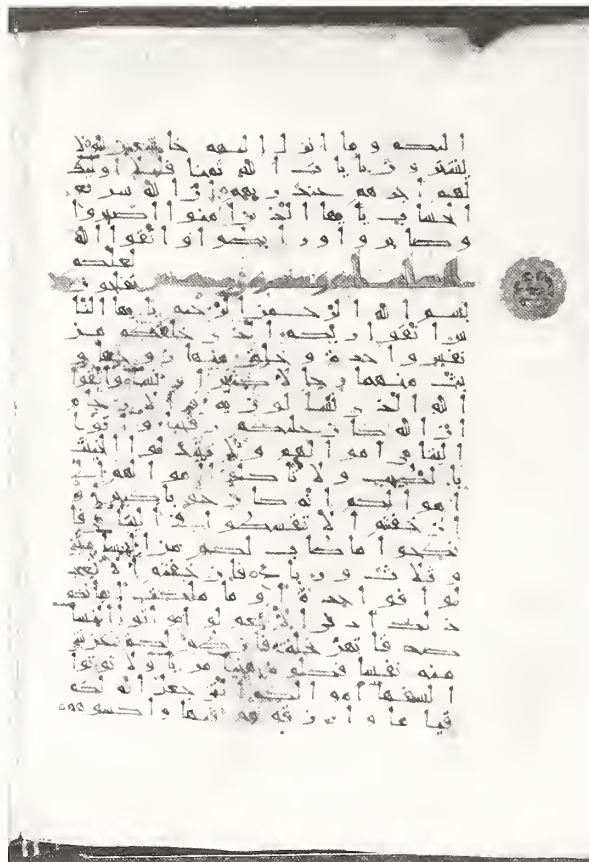


FIG. 12. Semi-Kūfic Qur'ān fragment on vellum,  
late tenth century, Iraq or Iran.  
London, British Library, 11,735, f. 46b.

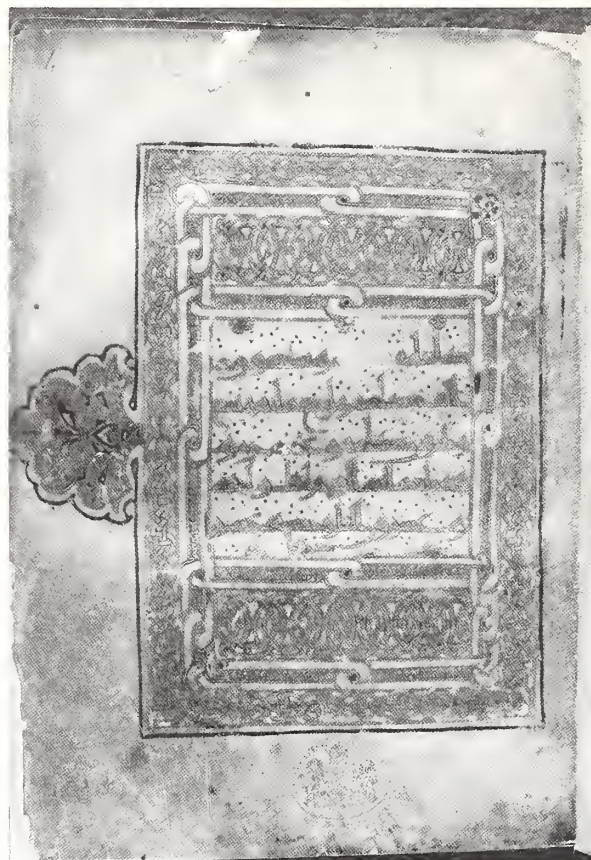


FIG. 13. Verse count. London, British Library, 11,735, f. 4b.

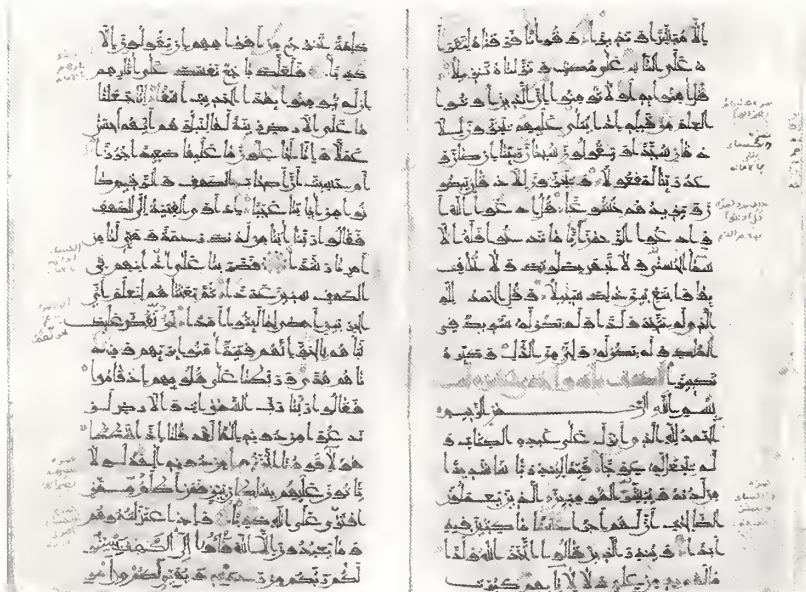


FIG. 14. Semi-Kūfic Qur'ān on vellum, Iraq or Iran, late tenth century.  
Istanbul, Topkapi Saray Library, R-38, ff. 12b and 13a.

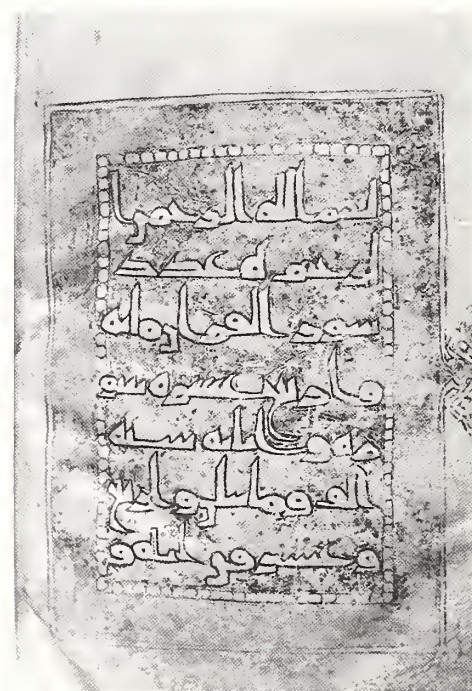


FIG. 15. Verse count.  
Istanbul, Topkapi Saray Library, R-38, f. 317b.



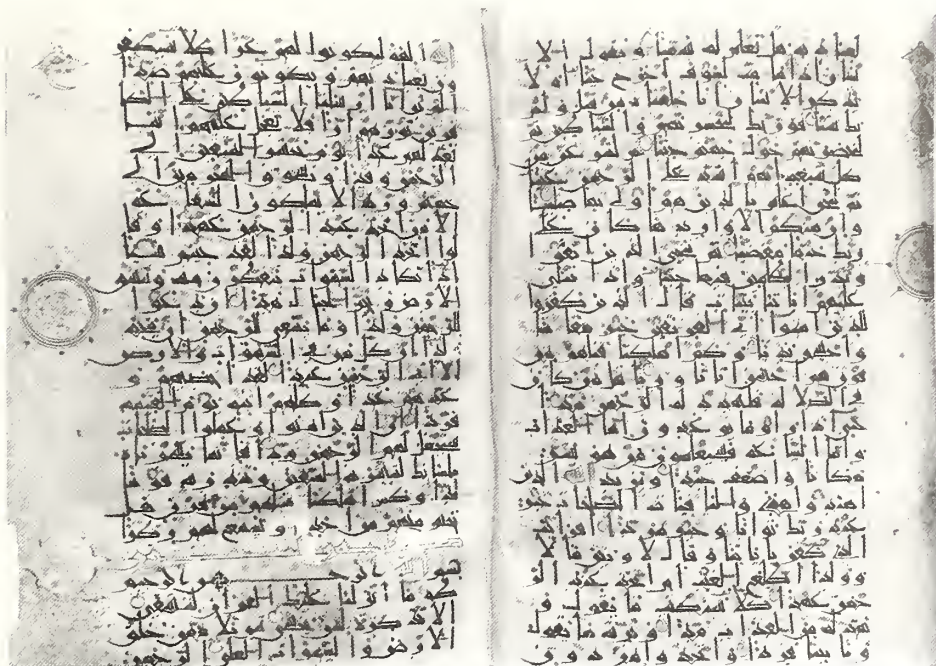


FIG. 16. Semi-Kūfic Qurʾān on paper, Iraq/Iran, 394/1004–5. Istanbul, Topkapı Saray Library, Y-752.

the so-called Hījāzī Qurʾānic manuscripts of the *mā'il* script and even more commonly in secular manuscripts.<sup>48</sup> The motive for this change has not been determined, but it is unlikely to have been due to the switch from vellum to paper since both formats had been used previously with vellum. It is more likely that the use of the vertical format of secular manuscripts went hand in hand with the adoption of scripts that had been primarily used in the chancery and in literary manuscripts. The change in format, therefore, could have been simply an outgrowth of the calligraphic change. But it could also have been intentional, as a way of further differentiating the new Qurʾānic manuscripts from their predecessors.

The third feature shared by several semi-Kūfic Qurʾāns is that they begin with single- or double-illuminated folios that refer to the particular recension of the Qurʾān and give a verse count (figs. 9, 13, and 15). As far as we know, this feature did not exist in Abbasid Kūfic Qurʾāns<sup>49</sup> but begins with the earliest dated semi-Kūfic Qurʾān, namely CBL 1434, dated 972. Since most semi-Kūfic Qurʾāns exist as fragments with missing frontispieces and colophons, it is impossible to say what percentage of them would have included a verse count. But out of seven complete or nearly complete semi-Kūfic Qurʾāns from before the end of the eleventh century, four contain a verse count. Although admittedly a small sample, it does suggest at least that the use of verse count was a prevalent and quite deeply rooted practice in semi-Kūfic Qurʾāns between ca. 950 and ca. 1100.

The content of the verse count varies slightly from

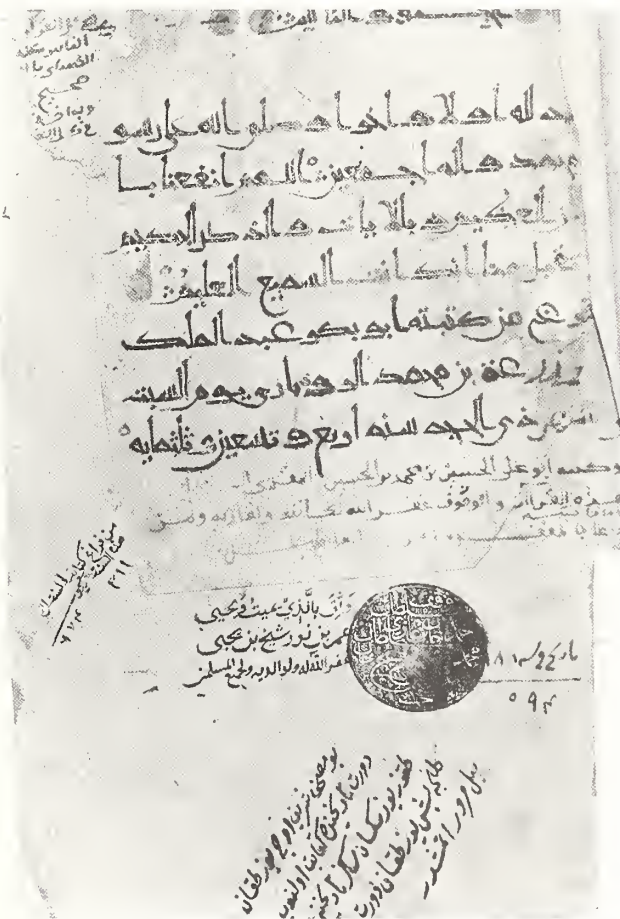


FIG. 17. Colophon, dated 394/1004–5, signed Abu Bakr 'Abd al-Malik ibn Zar'ah ibn Muḥammad al-Rūzbārī. Istanbul, Topkapı Saray Library, Y-752, f. 294a.





FIG. 18. Fragment from a semi-Kūfīc Qurʾān on paper, Iran or Afghanistan, mid eleventh century. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 40.164.2b.

one manuscript to the next, but it generally includes the number of *sūras* and words in the Qurʾān. CBL 1434 begins with two folios (ff. 1b, 2a) that give within circular medallions the number of *sūras* (114), verses



FIG. 19. Fragment of a semi-Kūfīc Qurʾān on paper, Iraq or Iran, eleventh century. Istanbul, Topkapi Saray Library, R-10, f. 31a.

(6,226), words (27,439), and even letters (321,015) (fig. 9). BL 11,735, which is datable to the second half of the tenth century in view of its use of vellum, contains the second folio (f. 1a) of a double-folio verse count (fig. 13). It gives exactly the same figures as CBL 1434 for the number of words and letters. TKS R-38, which is also a vellum manuscript, contains in its last folio (f. 317b) the first part of a two-folio verse count that gives the number of *sūras* in the Qurʾān as 114 and the number of verses as 6,224 (fig. 15). In TKS R-10, a paper manuscript, the statistical information also once covered two folios, one of which (f. 235a) is still preserved but in such a fragmentary condition as to render it practically illegible with any accuracy. Finally, the highly unusual fragments at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 40.164. 21a–d, contain a rather detailed verse count in very small semi-Kūfīc script at the beginning of each chapter (fig. 18).

Semi-Kūfīc Qurʾāns, therefore, differ from Abbasid Kūfīc Qurʾāns in terms of their medium, format, script, diacritical marks, and verse count. Despite their superficial similarity to the earlier Qurʾāns, they should not be seen simply as a stage in a continuous evolution from angular to cursive but rather as a complete, and as I will argue deliberate, departure from past custom. Once this transformation is accepted on these terms, we must then look for the factors that led up to it. But before doing that we should examine next the second step in the transformation of Qurʾānic calligraphy, the one traditionally associated with Ibn al-Bawwāb.

### *Ibn al-Bawwāb and his Circle of Influence*

The second most important stage in the reformation of Qurʾānic calligraphy took place under Ibn al-Bawwāb (d. 1022). All the sources agree that Ibn al-Bawwāb followed the method of Ibn Muqla but further improved it by making the script clearer, more cursive, and more elegant. Ibn Khallikān, the thirteenth-century historian, said that “Ibn al-Bawwāb revised and refined [the method of Ibn Muqla] and vested it with elegance and splendor.”<sup>50</sup> Ibn Kathīr, the fourteenth-century Damascene historian, added that “[Ibn al-Bawwāb’s] writing is clearer in form than Ibn Muqla’s” and that in the author’s time “all people in all climes follow his method except a few.”<sup>51</sup>

Only one small Qurʾān has been securely attributed to Ibn al-Bawwāb, the famous copy at the Chester Beatty Library (1431), dated 391/1000–1 (figs. 20–23).<sup>52</sup> This is the earliest known cursive Qurʾān and undoubtedly one of the earliest made, since Ibn al-Bawwāb was the first to write Qurʾāns in fully cursive



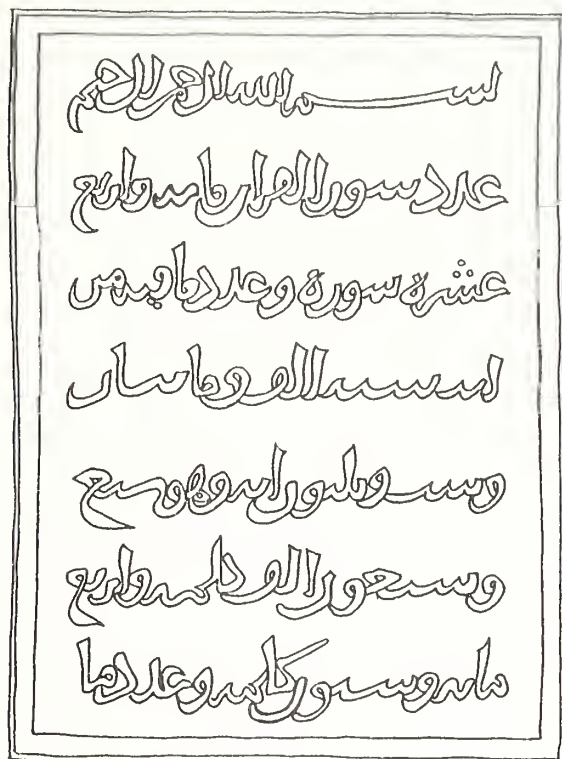
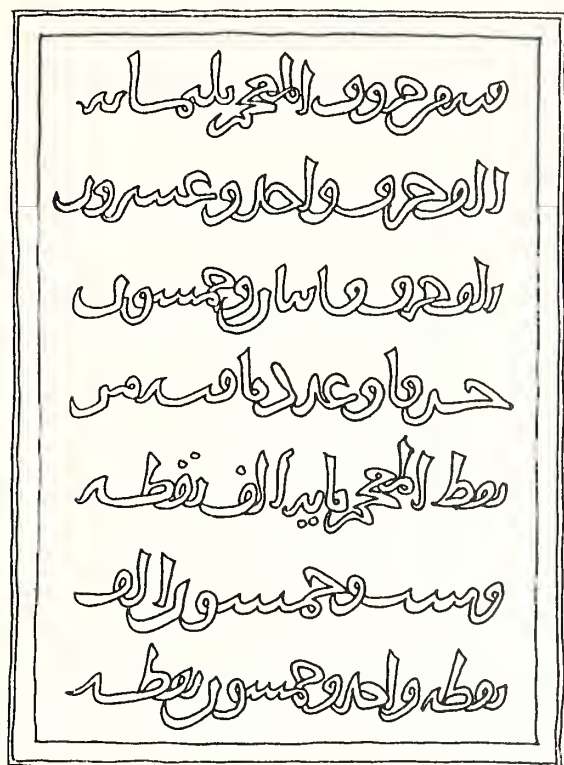


FIG. 20. Qur'ān of Ibn al-Bawwāb, Baghdad, 391/1000–1, signed 'Alī ibn Hilāl Ibn al-Bawwāb. Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, 1431, drawing of verse count on ff. 6b and 7a.

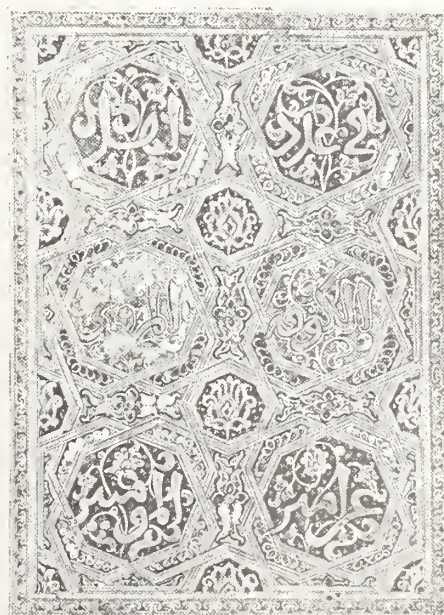
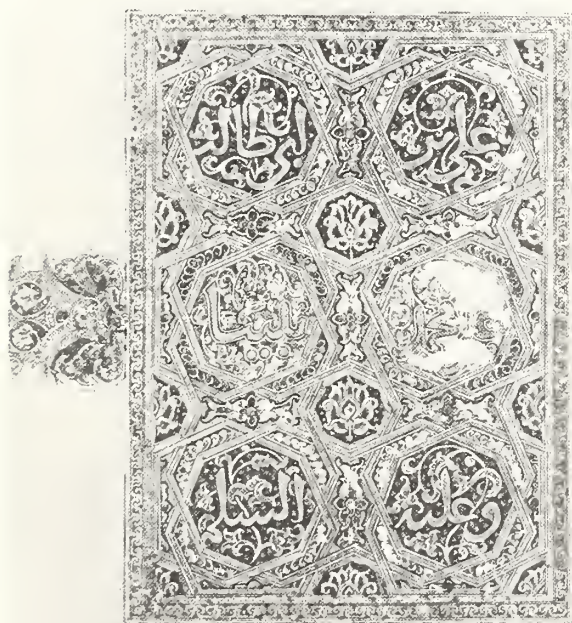


FIG. 21. Qur'ān of Ibn al-Bawwāb. Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, 1431, ff. 7b and 8a.



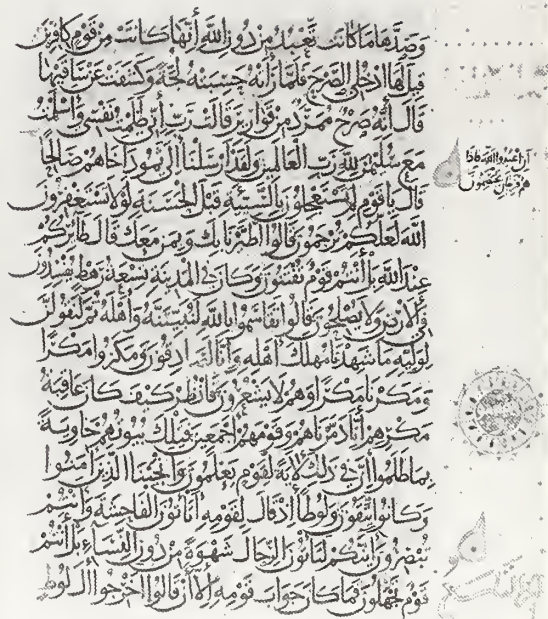
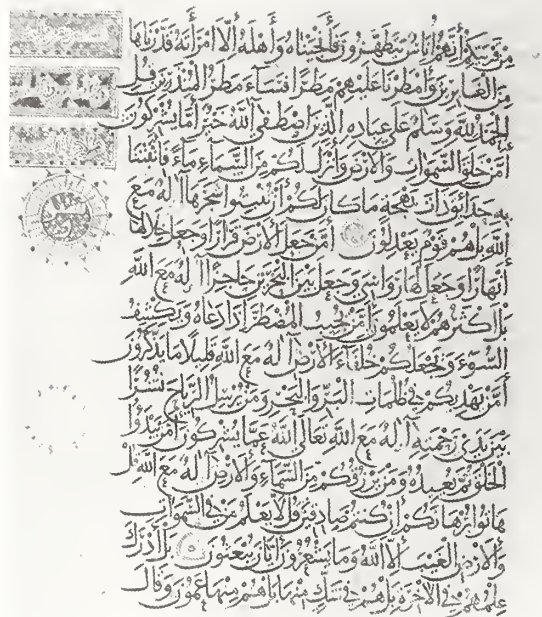


FIG. 22. Qurʾān of Ibn al-Bawwāb. Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, 1431, f. 241a and 241b. After Rice, *Ibn al-Bawwāb*.

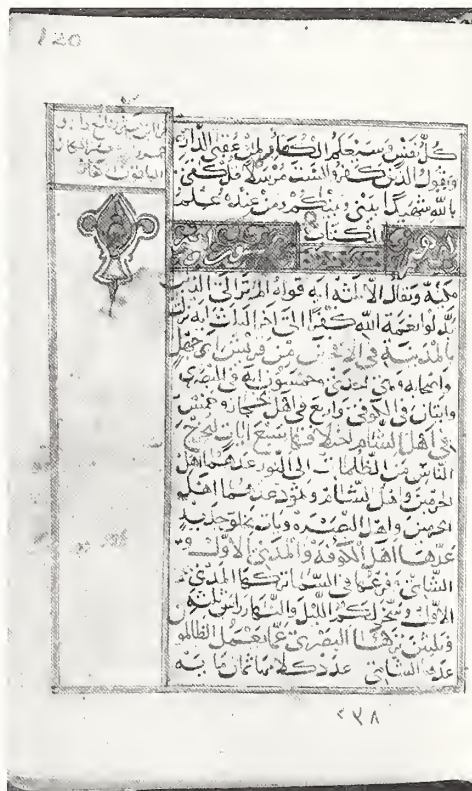


FIG. 24. Small cursive Qur'ān on paper,  
Baghdad?, dated 402/1011, signed Sa'd ibn  
Muḥammad ibn Sa'd al-Karkhī. London, British  
Library, Or. 13002, f. 120a.

FIG. 23. Qur'ān of Ibn al-Bawwāb. Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, 1431, f. 284a. After Rice, *Ibn al-Bawwāb*.

TABLE 3. Dated Cursive Qurʾāns, 1000–1200

<i>manuscript</i>	<i>place and date</i>	<i>script</i>	<i>verse count</i>	<i>fig. nos.</i>
CBL 1431 (complete Qurʾān)	Baghdad 391/1000–1	text: <i>naskh</i> ; headings: <i>thuluth</i>	on two double folios	20–23
BL Or. 13002 (complete Qurʾān)	Baghdad 402/1011	text: small <i>naskh</i> ; headings: varied	on ff. 22b, 23a	24
TIM 431/2 (complete Qurʾān)	Iran 419/1026	text: <i>naskh</i> ; headings: <i>thuluth</i>	only in <i>sūra</i> headings	25, 26
BL Add. 7214 (complete Qurʾān)	Baghdad 427/1036	text: small <i>naskh</i> ; headings: semi-Kūfic	in <i>sūra</i> headings and margins	28
CBL 1430 (complete Qurʾān)	Iraq or Iran 428/1037	text: small <i>naskh</i> ; headings: floriated Kūfic	only in <i>sūra</i> headings	29, 30
TIM 449 (incomplete Qurʾān)	Baghdad? early eleventh century	text: <i>naskh</i> ; headings: Eastern Kūfic	none preserved	31, 32
DK 227 (3/4 of Qurʾān)	Iraq or Iran 491/1106	text: large <i>naskh</i> ; headings: <i>thuluth</i>	only in <i>sūra</i> headings	
BN Ar. 6041 (fifth <i>juzʾ</i> of Qurʾān)	Bust (Iran) 505/1111–12	text: <i>naskh</i> verging on <i>thuluth</i>	none in this <i>juzʾ</i>	33, 34
DK 144 (complete Qurʾān)	Iraq or Iran 555/1160	text: <i>rayḥān</i> ; headings: <i>thuluth</i>	only in <i>sūra</i> headings	
UMP NEP-27 (complete Qurʾān)	Hamadhan, Iran 559/1164	text: <i>naskh</i> ; headings: <i>thuluth</i> and semi-Kūfic	very detailed, on ff. 1a, 1b	35, 36
CBL 1438 (complete Qurʾān)	Iraq or Iran 582/1186	text: <i>muḥaqqaq</i> and <i>naskh</i> ; headings: E. Kūfic and <i>thuluth</i>	on ff. 1b, 2a	37, 38
CBL 1435 (large part of Qurʾān)	Iran 592/1195	text: <i>naskh</i> ; headings: E. Kūfic	on ff. 2b, 3a	39, 40
CBL 1439 (complete Qurʾān)	Iraq or Iran 597/1200	text: large <i>naskh</i> ; headings: E. Kūfic	on ff. 1b, 2a	41, 42

scripts (table 3). Written on brownish paper in a clear and compact *naskh*, this manuscript is rather easy to belittle: it has neither the majesty and mystery of early Kūfic folios nor the grandeur and sumptuousness of later cursive Qurʾāns. But it is precisely because it looks so familiar and legible to the contemporary reader that this Qurʾānic manuscript is in fact so original. In effect, this copy makes a clear and final break with the majestic but ambiguous script of the first three Islamic centuries, replacing it with a robustly cursive and perfectly legible script that has survived until the present day.<sup>53</sup>

The two most important cursive scripts are represented in this manuscript, *naskh* in the text and a variety of *thuluth* in the opening folios and *sūra* headings. *Naskh* was one of the pens in which Ibn al-Bawwāb excelled, and his particular style in writing seems to have been imitated until near the end of the twelfth century (e.g., figs. 30, 32, and 41). James has recently suggested that “the *naskh* of Ibn al-Bawwāb seems to be associated with areas east of Baghdad,”<sup>54</sup> an observation that is readily confirmed by several Iraqi and Persian manuscripts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.<sup>55</sup> In fact, the renown of Ibn al-Bawwāb’s Qurʾānic *naskh* immediately brings to mind the wide appeal of Ibn Muqla’s calligraphic method.

As with Ibn Muqla, the manuscripts closest in date to Ibn al-Bawwāb (before 1100) adhere the most closely to his hand while those from the succeeding century begin to show some divergence (e.g., figs. 36 and 37).<sup>56</sup>

The *thuluth* used in the statistical pages and the *sūra* headings of the Qurʾān of Ibn al-Bawwāb is no less remarkable than the *naskh* used in the text (figs. 20 and 21). Despite its early date, it shows a number of refinements that remain with Qurʾānic calligraphy for nearly two centuries and that even influence monumental writing. The script is of a type called *thuluth-ashʿar*, appearing here as a fully cursive script, thinly outlined in gold. Although somewhat densely written, the script is especially noteworthy for its clarity and legibility, achieved in part by its totally explicit letter forms, with open “eyes” and pointed uprights (*tarwīs* of the *alif* and *lām*).

The overall squatness of the script is relieved by variation in the thickness of its lines and by the very distinctive feature of interconnection: normally unconnected letters and even independent words are connected smoothly to one another through the use of thin, sinuous extensions. This identifying feature occurs a number of times in the introductory folios, as for example on f. 6b, line 5 (fig. 20), where the *waw*



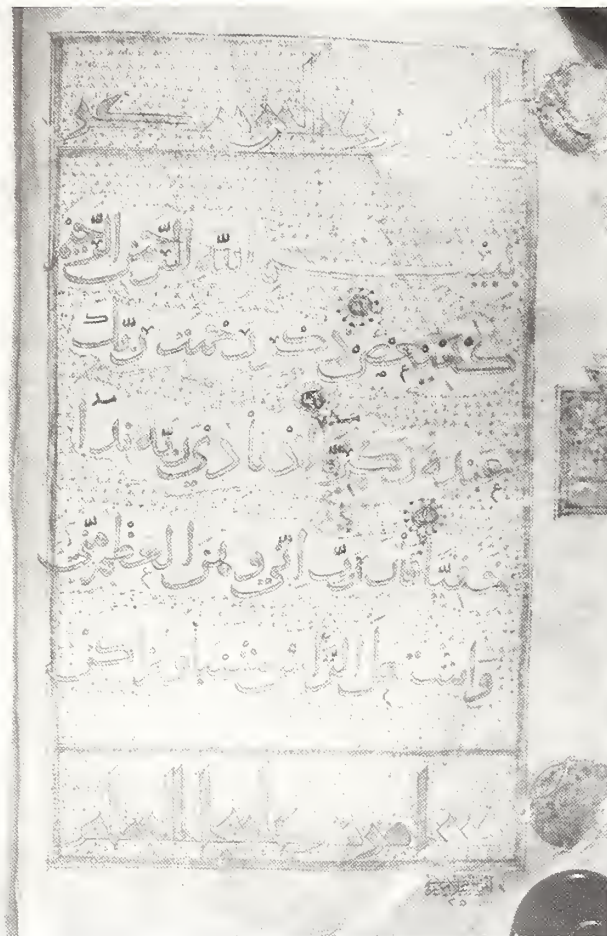


FIG. 25. Qur'ān in large gold *naskh* on paper, possibly Iran; possibly made for a Sulayhid prince in Yemen, dated 419/1026, signed Al-Ḥasan ibn 'Abdallāh. Istanbul, Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, 431/2.



FIG. 26. Heading of Sūra 21 (*Al-Anbiya*) in *thuluth*, 419/1026. Istanbul, Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, 431/2.

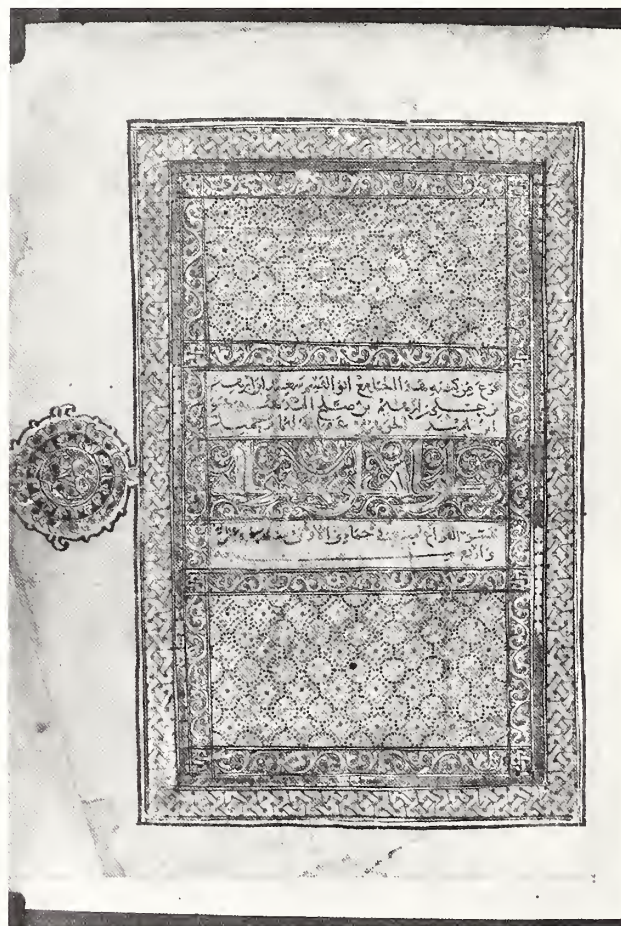


FIG. 28. Qur'ān in small *naskh* script on brownish paper, Iraq or Iran, dated Jumada I 427/March 1036, calligrapher: Abū'l-Qāsim Sa'īd . . . ibn Tilmīdh al-Jawhārī, illuminator: Abū Maṣnū' ibn Nāfi' ibn 'Abdallāh. London, British Library, Add. 7214, f. 74a.



FIG. 27. Maghribi Kūfīc Qur'ān on vellum, North Africa, eleventh century, sūras 99–104. Note headings in *thuluth*. Istanbul, Topkapı Saray Library, A3, f. 285a.



of *huwa* is connected to the *sin* of *sabʿūn*, and on f. 8a, line 1, where the *alif* and the *bāʾ* of *abī* are interconnected (fig. 21). Some of the manuscripts in the present sample and several later ones slavishly copy this peculiarity, or perhaps embellishment, at first because of the immediate impact of Ibn al-Bawwāb but later perhaps as a sign of homage to the great calligrapher (fig. 19).<sup>57</sup> In fact, it can be said that nearly all the manuscripts in table 3 that employ *thuluth* (i.e., BL Or. 13002, TIM 431/2, CBL 1430, DK 227, DK 144, UMP NEP-27, CBL 1438) copy the style of Ibn al-Bawwāb, down to the feature of interconnection (e.g., figs. 24, 26, and 37).<sup>58</sup>

The influence of Ibn al-Bawwāb extended even farther than that of Ibn Muqla, and calligraphers continued to employ his method for more than two centuries after his death.<sup>59</sup> Later calligraphers not only honored and emulated him, but a few even made forgeries bearing his signature and attempted to sell them as originals. Some of these forgeries were almost contemporary with Ibn al-Bawwāb<sup>60</sup> while others postdated him by several centuries.<sup>61</sup> Although his impact was mainly felt in the lands east of Baghdad, at least one Qurʾān manuscript from North Africa (TKS A3), datable to the late eleventh century, tries to copy the *thuluth* of Ibn al-Bawwāb in its *sūra* titles (fig. 27). The calligrapher, who was quite proficient in the Maghribi style in which most of

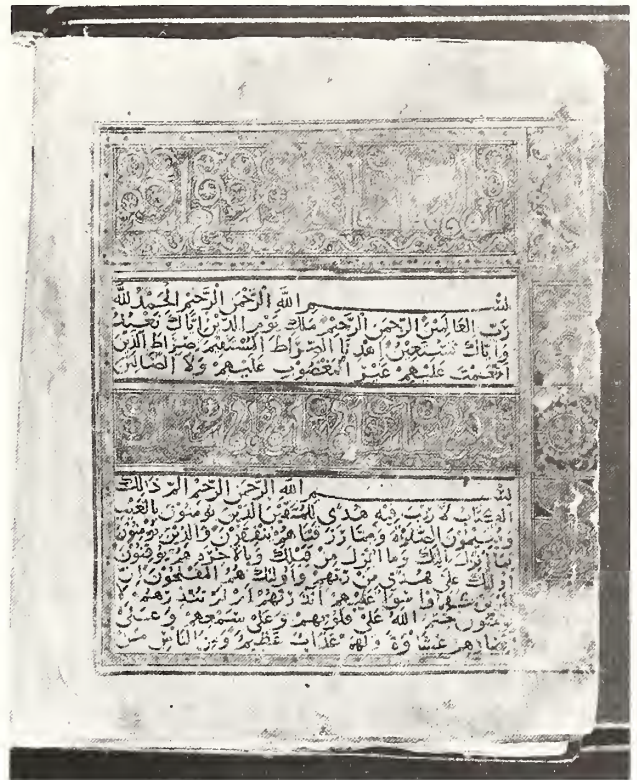


FIG. 29. Qurʾān in small *naskh* script on brownish paper, Iraq or Iran, dated 21 Rajab 428/10 May 1037. Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, 1430, f. 1b.

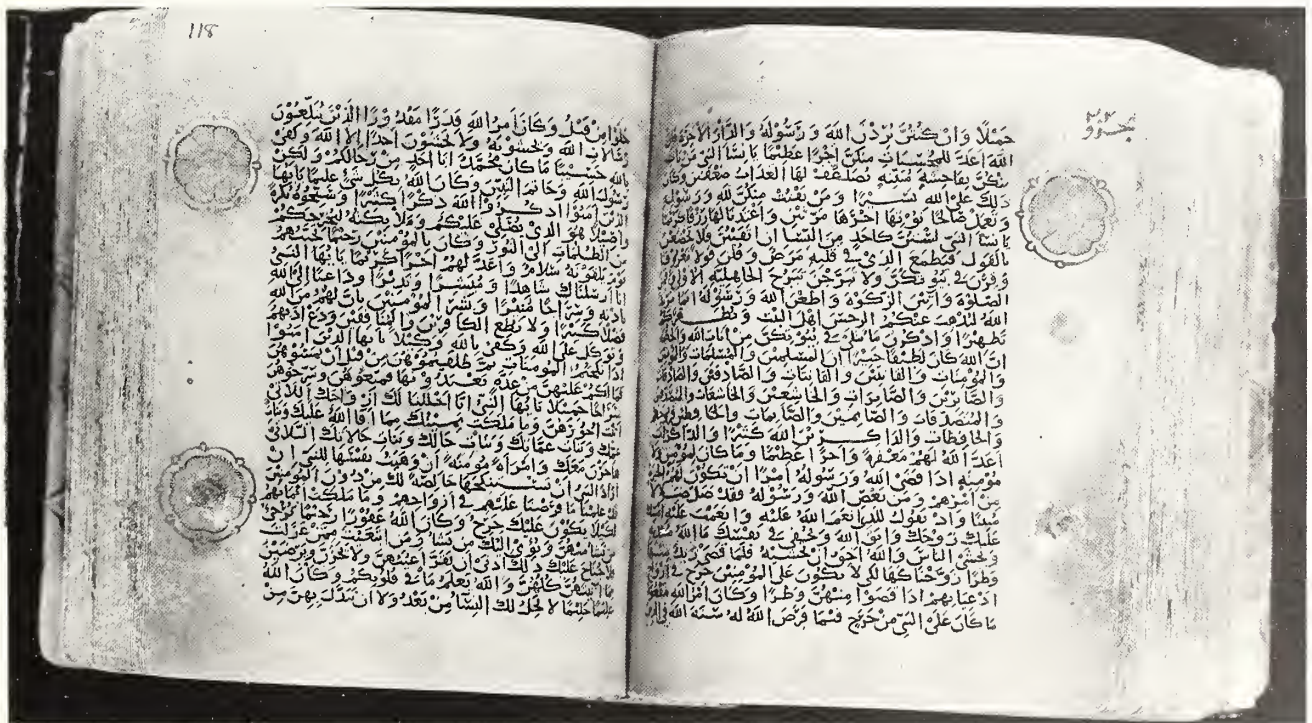


FIG. 30. Qurʾān in small *naskh* script on brownish paper, Iraq or Iran, 1037. Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, 1430, ff. 117b and 118a. Note the striking similarity to the script of British Library, Add. 7214 (fig. 28).



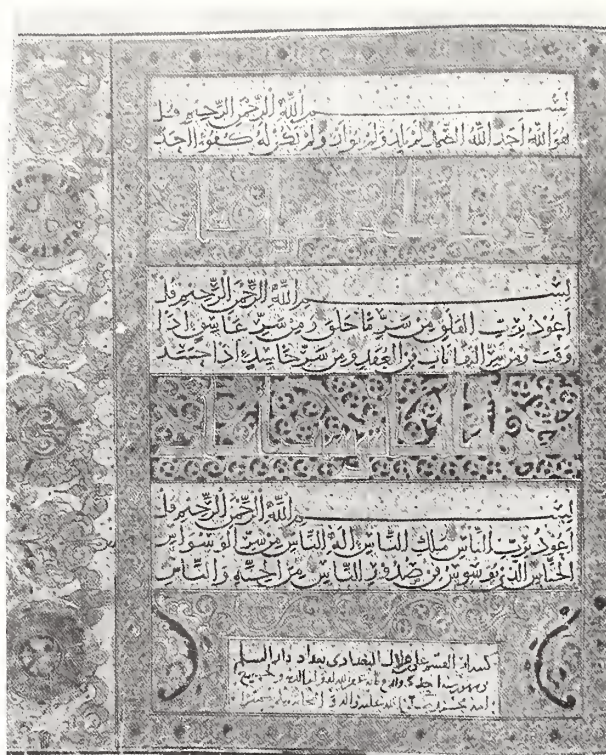


FIG. 31. Qur'ān in small *naskh* script on thick buff paper, Baghdad? early eleventh century, colophon falsely signed in the name of Ibn al-Bawwāb. Istanbul, Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, 449, f. 286a.



FIG. 32. Qur'ān in small *naskh*, Baghdad? early eleventh century. Istanbul, Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, 449.

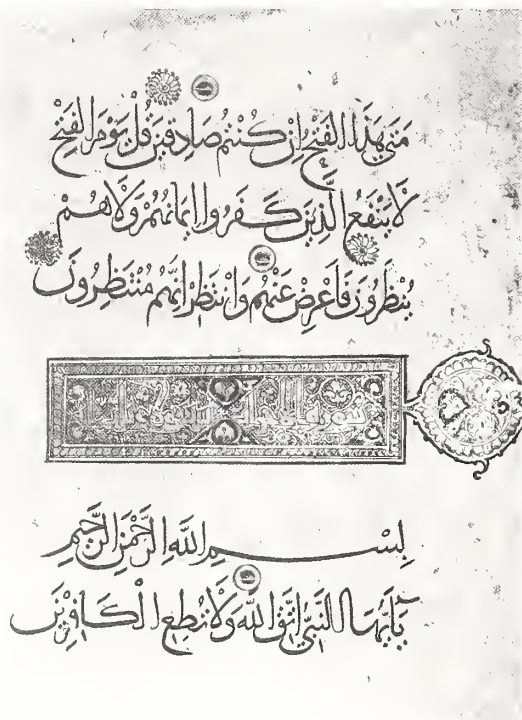


FIG. 33. Fifth volume of Qur'ān in *lawqī*, pen on paper, Bust (Iran), dated 505/1111–12, signed 'Uthmān ibn Muhammad'. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ar. 6041, f. 107a.

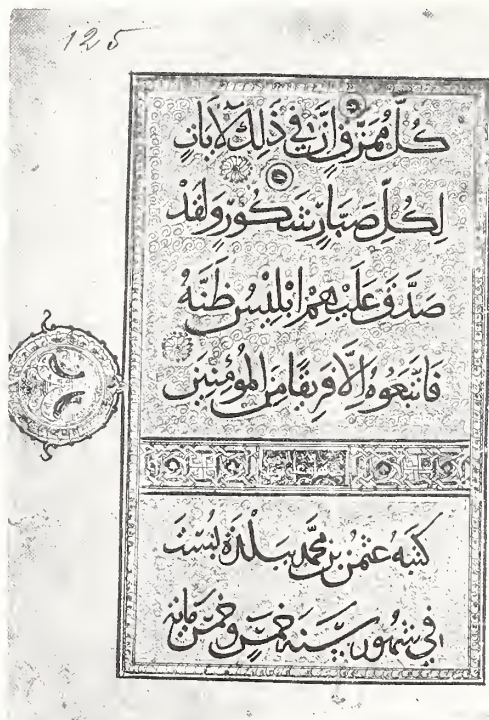


FIG. 34. Colophon of Bust Qur'ān, 1111–12. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ar. 6041, f. 125a.



the manuscript is written, betrays a certain naiveté when trying to write such a distinctive cursive script. An even greater illustration of Ibn al-Bawwāb's prominence among later calligraphers is an early sixteenth-century manuscript that attempts to reproduce his various styles.<sup>62</sup> Written five hundred years after Ibn al-Bawwāb and dedicated almost in its entirety to his various calligraphic styles, this manuscript must be seen as an homage to the great master and as an attempt to perpetuate his legacy.

It is important to note, however, that despite their great renown and immediate influence in the eastern Islamic world, Ibn Muqla and Ibn al-Bawwāb had virtually no impact on Egypt. Out of our two samples

of eight semi-Kūfic and thirteen early cursive Qur'ān manuscripts, not one was produced in Fātimid Egypt. In fact the vast majority were made in Iraq and Iran, with Baghdad occupying a position of honor. Geography may have played a role: Baghdad, the center of this calligraphic transformation, was in the period under consideration better connected with Iran than with Egypt. But the absence of any semi-Kūfic or cursive Qur'ān manuscripts from Egypt until the beginning of the thirteenth century must have another explanation, to which I will return.

In addition to perfecting the cursive proportioned script, the Qur'ān of Ibn al-Bawwāb contains other important developments. The two-folio verse count,



FIG. 35. Qur'ān in *naskh* on paper, Hamadhan (Iran), dated 559/1164, signed Maḥmūd ibn al-Husayn al-Kātib al-Kirmānī. The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, NEP-27, f. 1a (neg. #21586). Opening page showing verse count according to different schools.



FIG. 36. Qur'ān in *naskh* on paper, Hamadhan, 1164. The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, NEP-27, f. 2a, *al-Fātiḥa* (neg. #21590).



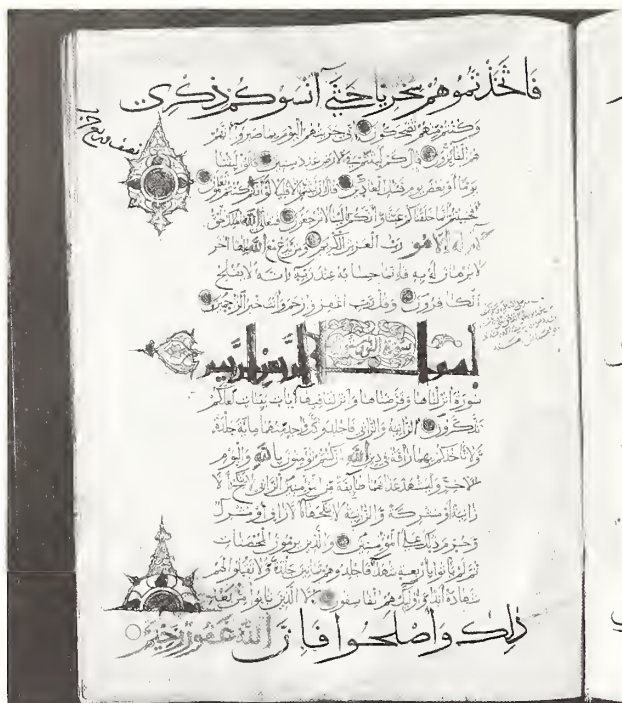


FIG. 37. Qur'ān in *naskh* and *muhaqqaq* with *thuluth* and Eastern Kūfic headings, Iraq or Iran, dated 15 Jumada I, 582/3 August 1186, signed 'Abd al-Rahmān . . . al-Kātib al-Malikī 'Zarrin Qalam'. Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, 1438, f. 125a. Throughout the manuscript one line of *muhaqqaq* alternates with several lines of *naskh*; Eastern Kūfic is used for Bismillāh and *sūra* titles; small gold *thuluth* is employed for emphasis.

which we have seen in several semi-Kūfic Qur'āns, is further expanded here to enumerate the words and letters in each *sūra*, the total number of words and letters in the Qur'ān, and even the number of dotted and undotted letters (ff. 6b and 7a; fig. 20). Such obsessive record keeping seems to stand in sharp contrast to the early Kūfic Qur'āns, none of which included even the most casual verse count.

The verse count is followed by another double folio (7b and 8a; fig. 21), which mentions the particular recension of this Qur'ān. Placed within hexagonal cartouches, six per page, the inscription reads:

[f. 7b:] According to the count of the people of Kūfa, which is told after the Commander of the Believers

[f. 8a:] 'Alī ibn abī Ṭālib and Muhammad our Prophet, peace be on him

Despite being the first documented Qur'ān to refer to any recension, it does not provide quite enough information, since Kūfa boasted not one but three canonical Qur'ānic readers, namely 'Āṣim, Ḥamza, and al-Kisā'i.<sup>63</sup> It is possible that this was a deliberate ambiguity, intended to establish the authority of this Qur'ān by reference to all three of these recensions.

Of the thirteen dated eleventh- and twelfth-century Qur'āns in this sample, the first six (all from the first half of the eleventh century) are quite easily comparable with the Qur'ān of Ibn al-Bawwāb in terms

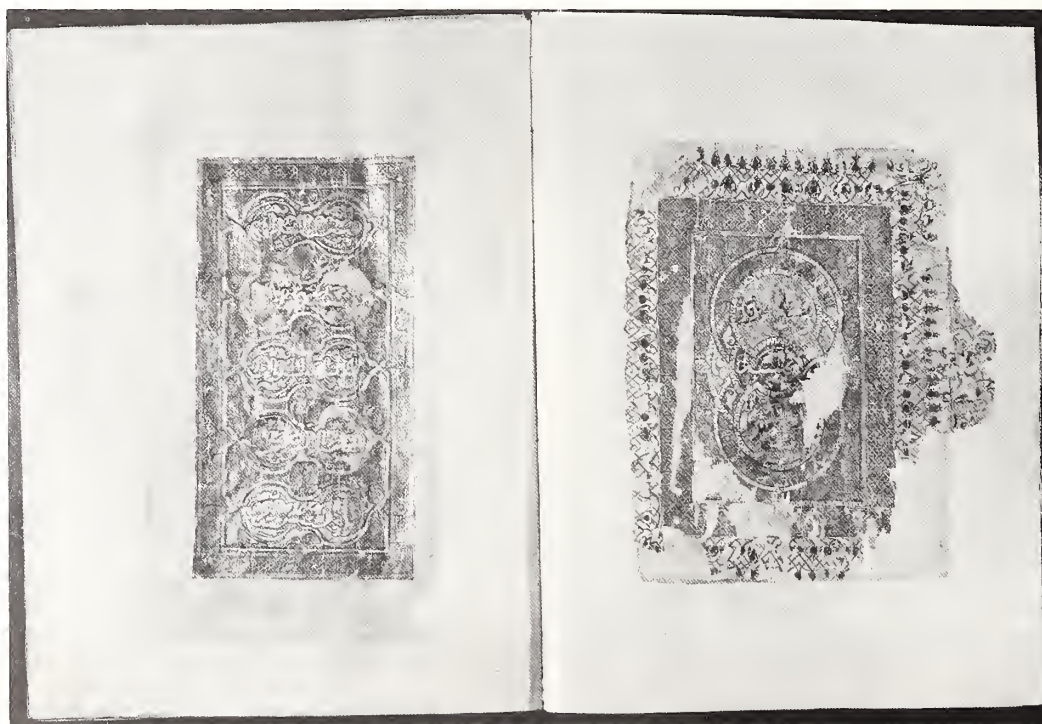


FIG. 38. Verse count. Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, 1438, f. 2a and 1b.



FIG. 39. Large section of a Qurʾān in *naskh*, Iraq or Iran, dated Muharram 592/December 1195, signed Abū Naʿīm ibn Ḥamza al-Baihaqī. Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, 1435, ff. 117b and 118a.

of calligraphy, size, and the reliance on accurate verse count (table 3). The closest to his hand are without doubt BL Add. 7214 (1036), CBL 1430 (1037), and TIM 449, which must be very close in date to these manuscripts but whose colophon has been rewritten to refer to Ibn al-Bawwāb (figs. 28–32).<sup>64</sup> Produced about two decades after the death of the master, possibly by students of his, the *naskh* hand used in these splendid manuscripts is extremely close to that of Ibn al-Bawwāb. BL Or. 13002, the closest in date to Ibn al-Bawwāb, also uses a similar *naskh* hand but is on the whole a less accomplished manuscript (fig. 24). TIM 431/2 (figs. 25 and 26), which seems to have been intended for the Sulayhid ruler of Yemen, clearly belongs to a higher level of patronage than the only extant Ibn al-Bawwāb manuscript. Although the undotted *thuluth ashʿar* used in some of the *sūra* headings (fig. 26) recalls the *thuluth* of Ibn al-Bawwāb, the text itself is written in a totally original mixture midway between *naskh* and golden *thuluth*. Indeed, the lavish use of gold, the numerous illuminations, and, for the time, the large size of the script seem to describe a royal manuscript that has yet to be properly studied.

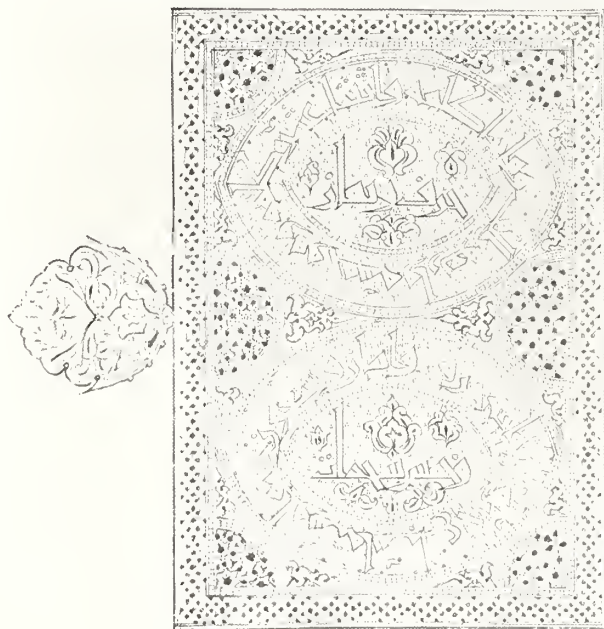


FIG. 40. Verse count. Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, 1435, f. 3a.



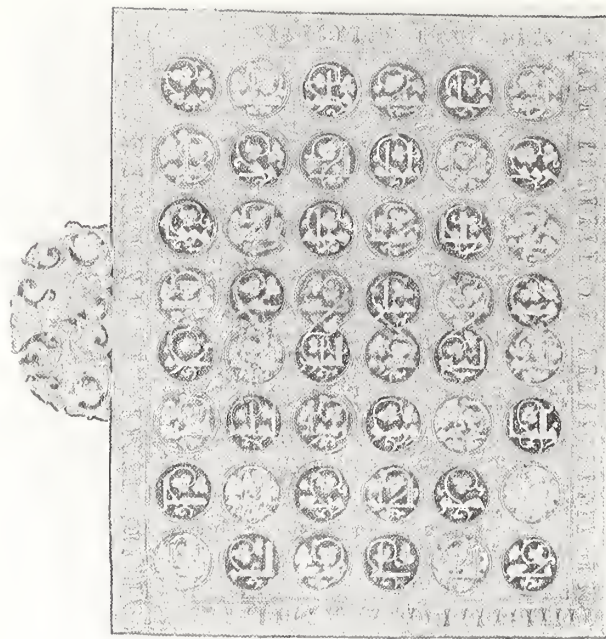


FIG. 41. Qurʾān in *naskh* on paper, Iraq or Iran, datable by *waqf* to ca. 597/1200, signed by calligrapher Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Jabali and illuminator ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣūfī. Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, 1439, f. 366b.



FIG. 42. Verse count in floriated Kūfic contained within circular medallions. Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, 1439, f. 1r.

As would be expected, manuscripts from the twelfth century, which are separated from Ibn al-Bawwāb by five or more generations, display much greater calligraphic freedom. One of the most original is the little-known manuscript BN Ar. 6041, written in Bust (Iran) in 505/1111–12. Déroche has convincingly identified its script as *tawqīʿ*, which is a larger and more cursive pen than *naskh* (figs. 33 and 34).<sup>65</sup> NEP-27 at The University Museum in Philadelphia uses a rather sparse *naskh* script, which is comparable though not identical to that of Ibn al-Bawwāb (fig. 36). CBL 1438, dated 582/1186 and written by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Kātib al-Malikī ‘Zarrin Qalam’, has been identified by James as a royal manuscript.<sup>66</sup> It displays a bewildering array of scripts, including Eastern Kūfic, *muḥaqqaq*, *naskh*, and a *thuluth* that is remarkably close to the hand of Ibn al-Bawwāb (figs. 37 and 38). As with the earlier TIM 431/2, its royal status sets it apart from the less elaborate Qurʾān of Ibn al-Bawwāb. The last two manuscripts in the sample, CBL 1435 and 1439, dated respectively 1195 and 1200, are both written in a clear and sober *naskh* that resembles the style of Ibn al-Bawwāb in most respects but has taller uprights and far fewer lines per page (figs. 39–42).

Taken as a group, six out of the thirteen manuscripts in the sample contain a verse count (figs. 20, 24, 35, 38, 40, and 42). Restricting the sample to the ten complete Qurʾāns, we still get six manuscripts

with full verse count, leaving the possibility of an even higher ratio since folios bearing the verse count are especially vulnerable to destruction and loss.<sup>67</sup>

In short, then, this group of Ibn al-Bawwāb-related Qurʾāns exhibits some continuity and some development over Ibn Muqla-related tenth-century Qurʾāns. The new scripts are totally cursive, betraying none of the formulaic regularity of the semi-Kūfic group. Orthographic signs, while similar to those of the previous century, are more consistently used; verse counts are expanded and also used in *sūra* headings; and the particular recension is often clearly stated.

### Interpretation

Between about 930 and the first decades of the eleventh century, Qurʾānic calligraphy therefore underwent two decisive changes that completely transformed the physical appearance of the Qurʾān, both in sum and in detail. The first change led to the creation of a paper Qurʾān written in a crisp, sometimes rigid script with full diacritical marks, while the second resulted in a variety of fully cursive Qurʾāns, which have remained relatively unchanged until recently. Paleographic and artistic concerns aside, what really distinguishes these Qurʾāns from the earlier Kūfic ones is legibility. Semi-Kūfic Qurʾāns

are, with the exception of some ornate examples, reasonably legible, while the fully cursive ones can be easily read by any literate person.

This raises a number of important questions. What was behind this two-phase but total transformation of Qur'ānic calligraphy? Why was a script as old as Islam itself abandoned in Qur'ānic writing and replaced by the reformed scripts of Ibn Muqla and Ibn al-Bawwāb—scripts that had originated in the secular sphere? In what ways was the old Kūfic script considered deficient, and what new associations did the new scripts convey vis-à-vis their predecessor? And lastly, what was the reason for the compulsion to count verses and record them accurately?

A technical explanation may stress the change from parchment to paper in Qur'āns—a change that had begun in other manuscripts as early as the late ninth century. Ernst Kühnel, for example, has suggested in passing that the spread of paper as an inexpensive writing medium in the succeeding centuries led to the development of a less cumbersome and pretentious style.<sup>68</sup> Actually, the impact of paper on literacy and book production in the Islamic world, which remains a poorly studied subject, was far more complicated than Kühnel suggests.<sup>69</sup> There is little doubt that the availability of Chinese paper from the eighth century and its widespread manufacture in the Islamic world by the tenth century contributed to the expansion of literacy. As a cheap writing medium became available, the number of scribes (*nussākh*) increased and so did the number of scripts, which in turn led to the relaxation of calligraphic standards and the general decline in the quality of writing.<sup>70</sup> Some system was urgently needed for secular writing, and it was provided, as explained above, by Ibn Muqla in the form of *al-khatt al-mansūb*. But although paper and literacy were significant factors in this transformation, they do not explain why the new script was used for the Qur'ān, thereby ending a four-century-old tradition of angular writing. A technical explanation is simply untenable for a matter of such importance.

One is also tempted to see in the proportioned script yet another of the many applications of geometric principles to Islamic art in the late tenth and eleventh centuries. Certainly, the method of Ibn Muqla has more to do with geometry than with calligraphy—a fact that was not lost on contemporary authors. We might also add that there is a clear difference between the visible geometry of the angular Kūfic script and the invisible geometry of the proportioned script of Ibn al-Bawwāb, often described as a script without any visible external edges (*an lā turā min al-khārijī zawāyāhu*).<sup>71</sup> It is this

assimilated geometry that pervades a variety of artistic forms in the eleventh century, namely geometric strapwork and *muqarnas*. In fact, it can hardly be accidental that these calligraphic and architectural changes occur simultaneously and within the same geographic regions.<sup>72</sup>

Yet, despite the key role played by geometry in the formation of the proportioned script, it could not have been the primary cause for this development, and one has to search for the factors that led up to its application in Qur'ānic calligraphy. What the geometry of Ibn Muqla did was to make certain mundane scripts such as *naskh* sufficiently worthy for writing the Qur'ān. But the question remains as to why this development was demanded in the first place. Why was this new script preferred over the Kūfic for writing the Qur'ān?

To answer these questions we must look closely at certain contemporary ideas about the content of the Qur'ān. The need to produce a universal recension of the Qur'ān was strongly felt in the early Islamic period; finally, under the third caliph 'Uthmān, the official recension was finished, and all other variants were allegedly destroyed.<sup>73</sup> Only one reader, Ibn Mas'ūd, refused to destroy his version of the Qur'ān or stop teaching it when the 'Uthmānic recension was made official.<sup>74</sup> His codex, which differed from the 'Uthmānic recension in several important respects, was later taken over by the Shi'ite Fātimids.<sup>75</sup> As time went on, even the so-called canonical version once more became a source of great confusion because of the ambiguity of the script, "to the point that it became impossible to distinguish 'Uthmanic from non-'Uthmanic ones."<sup>76</sup>

By the end of the tenth century, the differences in the texts became more pronounced as a result of the general use of more precise scripts, making it possible for the authorities to enforce a greater measure of uniformity. Under the patronage of Caliph al-Muqtadir, a jurist named Aḥmad Ibn Mujāhid produced Qur'ānic codices based on the seven canonical readings belonging to important *qurrā'* of the eighth century. His views, set forth in a book called *Kitāb al-Sab'a*,<sup>77</sup> were adopted by none other than the Ibn Muqla, in his position as vizier of the Abbasid state, and made official in the year 322/934.

In fact, Ibn Muqla's involvement in the creation of a canonical body of Qur'ānic recensions went much further than that. He was certainly involved in the trials of two of the variant readers, Ibn Miskam and Ibn Shanabūdh.<sup>78</sup> The persecution of Ibn Shanabūdh, who had persisted in teaching the Qur'ān according to the non-'Uthmānic variant of Ibn Mas'ūd, by Ibn



Mujāhid and Ibn Muqla is especially noteworthy. He was brought to trial at a court presided over by the vizier Ibn Muqla, where he at first quite confidently and belligerently defended the variant readings that had provoked the charges. But after he had been flogged, he completely disavowed his previous position and signed a document stating that in the future he would adhere to the ʿUthmānic text.<sup>79</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, who also mentions Ibn Shanabūdh's flogging at the order of Ibn Muqla, quotes his alleged recantation: "I used to read expressions differing from the version of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, which was confirmed by consensus, its recital being agreed upon by the Companions of the Apostle of Allāh. Then it became clear to me that this was wrong, so that I am contrite because of it and from it torn away. Now before Allāh, may his Name be glorified for Him is acquittal, behold the version of ʿUthmān is the correct one, with which it is not proper to differ and other than which there is no way of reading."<sup>80</sup>

We have therefore in the person of Ibn Muqla both the calligrapher who created the calligraphic system that led to the conversion of the form of the Qurʾān and the vizier who enforced the caliphal order to establish a body of canonical Qurʾānic readings. There is every indication that the two matters are related: that the creation of *al-khaṭṭ al-mansūb* and its adoption for copying the Qurʾān were inspired by the canonization of the text of the Qurʾān. This reforming zeal is further reflected in the emphasis on correct verse count in the Qurʾāns of the tenth century. The new script, with its improved orthography and the correct numeration, would have left no doubt in the mind of Muslims that they were reading one of the new orthodox recensions, certainly not a Qurʾān with aberrant readings.

It is very likely that the act of al-Muqtadir and his vizier Ibn Muqla was politically motivated. The caliphate and orthodox Islam were under attack from many different sides by heterodox groups of various Shiʿite persuasions. Closest to Baghdad were the Qarāmiṭa, who had, during the reign of al-Muqtadir, occupied Baṣra and Kūfa and threatened Baghdad several times. Farther away, but nonetheless a threat to the orthodox caliphate, were the Fāṭimids, who in the first quarter of the tenth century had conquered central North Africa and Sicily and were pushing eastwards. In the face of these overwhelming threats the caliphate could resort to one of the very few weapons it had left, namely its nominal position as the safeguard of the Islamic community and the enforcer of the correct religion. Establishing the canonical recensions of the Qurʾān and creating a new unambiguous script for these standard versions

were acts in keeping with that role.

The second reform of the Qurʾānic script, the one that led to the Qurʾān of Ibn al-Bawwāb, also may have had its source in contemporary events. In 945 the Abbasid caliphate fell under the control of a foreign dynasty, namely the Buyids, who, to make matters worse, were Shiʿites. By the second half of the tenth century, in fact, most of the Islamic world was controlled by Shiʿite dynasties, with the Fāṭimids even proclaiming a Shiʿite counter-caliphate centered in Cairo. Only the Ghaznavids in northeastern Iran actively supported the staunch orthodoxy of the Abbasid caliph.

While the office of the caliph was immensely weakened under the Buyids, it was still possible for a strong caliph to reclaim some measure of power and authority, especially in times of disunity among the actual rulers. This is precisely what happened during the long reign of the assertive caliph al-Qādir (991–1031). Taking advantage of the strong popular reaction against the Buyids, al-Qādir gradually introduced measures that would undermine Shiʿite law and keep the Shiʿites out of governmental offices. In 1011, he issued a manifesto condemning the Fāṭimid doctrine, denigrating their genealogy, and declaring the Ismāʿīli Fāṭimids to be among the enemies of Islam.<sup>81</sup> In 1017 al-Qādir attempted something not tried since the caliph al-Maʾmūn in the ninth century, namely to promulgate an official theology that condemned all opposing doctrines. The so-called Epistle of al-Qādir (*al-Risāla al-Qādiriyya*) took aim primarily at the Muʿtazili-Shiʿites but also numbered much more moderate groups among its enemies. It forbade *kalām* and all other forms of theological argumentation and negation. It even permitted the imprisonment, exile, and execution of all those jurists and rulers who persisted in their unorthodox practice. Finally, it decreed the cursing of heterodox rulers at the pulpits of mosques and encouraged rebellion against them.<sup>82</sup>

The cornerstone of the arguments in the Epistle of al-Qādir, as explicated by his chief apologist al-Bāqillānī, concerned the nature of the Qurʾān: It was not created in time, as the Muʿtazilis and others believed, but simply recorded the eternal words of God.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, it was uncreated in whatever form it existed: *maktūb* (written), *maḥfūz* (memorized), *malluw* (recited), or *masmūʿ* (heard). It had only one meaning, not two—a surface meaning (*ẓāhir*) and a deeper reading (*bāṭin*)—as the Muʿtazilis and Ismāʿīlis maintained. Third, the Qurʾān of Ibn Masʿūd, which was used by the Fāṭimids, constituted an unacceptable alteration of the Qurʾānic text.<sup>84</sup> The first two tenets were related, for a Qurʾān that was created in time can be interpreted with greater freedom than

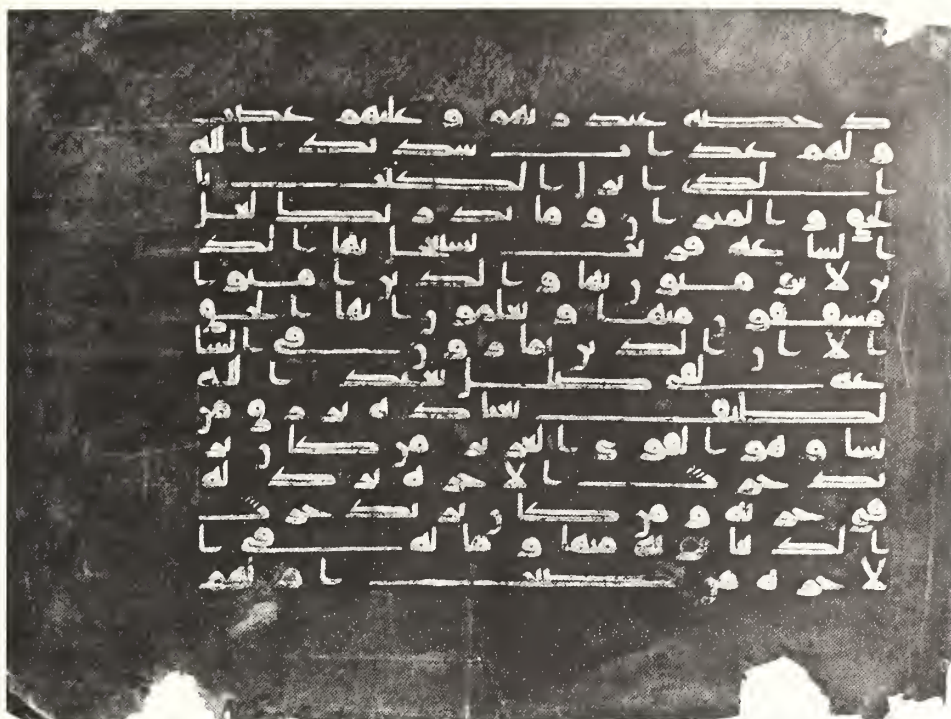


FIG. 43. Page from the "Blue Qur'an," gold on blue parchment, North Africa, tenth century.  
Private collection, chapter XLII, verses 10–23.

one that is, like God, eternal. And a Qurʾān with two levels of meaning must be interpreted by those who know for those who do not. Conversely, an eternal Qurʾān with a clearly manifest truth cannot be further interpreted, and therefore one had to accept the traditional exegesis presented by the jurists in the first two centuries of Islam. Therein lies the political importance of *al-Risāla al-Qādiriyya*. By closing the door to interpretation after the first two centuries of Islam and by insisting on the incorrectness of the recension of Ibn Masʿūd, it was undermining the religious foundations of the Fātimid and Buyid states and affirming the legitimacy of the Abbasid caliphate.

The Qurʾān of Ibn al-Bawwāb represents the creation of a perfectly cursive and easily legible script suitable for expressing the clear and explicit nature of the Word of God. Although ultimately based on the script of Ibn Muqla, the uncompromising clarity of the new script must be seen as a direct reflection of the Qādiri creed's insistence on the single and apparent truth in the Qurʾān.

Conversely, the reformed Qurʾān was equally intended to challenge the earlier Kūfic Qurʾāns, whose use seems to have continued in Fātimid Egypt until the establishment of the Ayyubid dynasty in the late twelfth century. As noted above, not one semi-Kūfic or early cursive Qurʾān seems to have been produced

under the Fātimids. In fact very few Fātimid Qurʾāns of any description are known, and to my knowledge, only the so-called "Blue Qurʾān" has been attributed with any degree of authority to the early Fātimid period in North Africa (fig. 43).<sup>85</sup> Scholars have often commented on the archaizing nature of the script, whose unvocalized and undotted letters seem to recall ninth-century Qurʾāns.<sup>86</sup> In fact, the ambiguity of the script is further enhanced in this manuscript by the fact that it is written in gold over dark blue. The gold shimmers and seems to flow over the receding blue background, creating an evanescent effect that appears to affirm the Muʿtazili belief in the created and mysterious nature of the Word of God. One can hardly imagine a greater contrast than that between a page from the "Blue Qurʾān" and one from the Qurʾān of Ibn al-Bawwāb.

The symbolic implications of the proportioned script have long been lost, but its usefulness remains as a clear and legible script. Yet, at the time of its inception and particularly its adoption throughout the only recently Sunni Islamic world, it literally reflected the triumph of a theological view and all its political ramifications. The actual image—not just the content—of the Word became the symbol of the most important principle of the Sunni revival, a movement that redefined the course of medieval Islam.



## Notes

For his help in the area of Qur'ānic readings, I would like to express my special gratitude to Professor Wolhart Heinrichs. I would also like to thank Professor Oleg Grabar for his valuable comments on several drafts of this paper. I am also grateful to Dr. Sheila Blair for her many helpful comments and bibliographic notes and to Muhammad Zakariyya for providing me with the "insider's view" as a practicing calligrapher and for his assistance in the question of *qirā'āt*. Obviously, I am alone responsible for the conclusions reached in this article.

1. The rise of Islamic epigraphy went hand in hand with the creation of two related bodies of historical inscriptions. The first and most important was the *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe*, ed. E. Combe et al., 16 vols. (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1932–64). The second, which combined epigraphy with architectural documentation, was *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum* (hereafter *MCIA*). It included the following publications: Max van Berchem, *MCIA, Première partie: Egypte, Mémoire de la Mission Archéologique Française au Caire* 19 (1894, 1903); van Berchem, *MCIA, Deuxième partie: Syrie du Sud, Jérusalem*, 2 vols., *Mémoire. Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (MFAO)* 43–44 (1922, 1927); and Ernst Herzfeld, *MCIA, Troisième partie: Syrie du Nord, Inscriptions et Monuments d'Alep*, 3 vols. (*MFAO*) 76–78 (1954–56).
2. The first attempts at using epigraphy for the interpretation of objects and monuments were made somewhat tentatively within the format of *MCIA* by Max van Berchem and later by Ernst Herzfeld. But the method was further developed by Oleg Grabar in his highly important study, "The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem," *Ars Orientalis* 3 (1959): 39–62. Even here, however, the austerity and rigidity of Umayyad Kūfīc and its effective illegibility from the viewer's standpoint may have further problematized the interpretation.
3. For example, even as recent a work as E. C. Dodd and S. Khairallah, *The Image of the Word: A Study of Quranic Verses in Islamic Architecture*, 2 vols. (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1981), pays very little attention to calligraphic form. See also my review of this publication in *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 17, no. 2 (May 1985): 263–66.
4. This is true of even the most recent publications, including Anthony Welch, *Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), 22–35; Priscilla Soucek, "Islamic Calligraphy," in *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia, 14th–16th Centuries*, ed. Basil Gray et al. (Boulder: Shambhala Publications, 1979), 7–34; and David James, *Qur'āns of the Mamluks* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988).
5. The trilogy of Ibn Muqla, Ibn al-Bawwāb and Yāqūt al-Musta'şimī is repeatedly invoked by all writers on Islamic calligraphy, including Yasin Safadi, *Islamic Calligraphy* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 13–19, and all those mentioned in the preceding note. But the cultural and political context in which these calligraphers worked is very rarely explored. Glenn Lowry has raised a similar objection regarding this restrictive view of the development of Islamic calligraphy in his excellent essay: "Introduction to Islamic Calligraphy," in Shen Fu, Glenn Lowry, and Ann Yonemura, *From Concept to Context: Approaches to Asian and Islamic Calligraphy* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1986), 104.
6. One of the few exceptions is Nabia Abbott, *The Rise of the North Arabic Script and Its Qur'ānic Development, with a Full Description of the Qur'ān Manuscripts in the Oriental Institute* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 33–41. Although the book is rich in its references to political and religious factors, these are not considered as possible causes for changes and variations in calligraphy.
7. Although somewhat based on semiotic theory, this exploration of the relationship between form and meaning is ultimately justified by contemporaneous literary theory. It has been shown, for example, that the literary critic 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 1078) had trodden similar grounds as early as the eleventh century. See *Al-Jurjānī's Theory of Poetic Imagery*, ed. Kamal Abu-Deeb (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1979), where the author elucidates the complex and rather modern principle of the image or form of meaning (*sūrat al-ma'na*), which he sees as a structural whole made up of inner relations. Calligraphy, which conveys a specific message within a complex artistic form, seems ideal for this kind of investigation. The sequel to this paper, which will deal with public inscriptions, will further explore this problem.
8. These include the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (MMA), The University Museum in Philadelphia (UMP), the British Library in London (BL), The Chester Beatty Library in Dublin (CBL), the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (BN), and the Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi (TIM). I acknowledge here my gratitude to the librarians and curators of these institutions for giving me access to their important collections. I was able to examine the original manuscripts and obtain the necessary photographs at all these libraries and museums except Dar al-Kutub al-Misriyya in Cairo (DK), where, due to conditions prevailing at the time of my visit in 1986, I had to content myself with the inadequate substitute of microfilms.
9. Abbott, *Rise*, 34–36.
10. Estelle Whelan, "Writing the Word of God: Some Early Qur'ān Manuscripts and Their Milieux, Part I," *Ars Orientalis* 20 (1990): 135 n. 110.
11. Whelan, "Writing the Word," 125.
12. François Déroche, *Les manuscrits du Coran, I: Aux origines de la calligraphie coranique* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1983), 14.
13. See, for example, the recent essay by Oleg Grabar, "Patronage in Islamic Art," in *Islamic Art and Patronage: Treasures from Kuwait*, ed. Esin Aul (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1990), 27–40.
14. This is easily demonstrated by a large number of early papyrus fragments that have been expertly examined by Abbott, *Rise*, 34–36, and Adolf Grohmann, *From the World of Arabic Papyri* (Cairo: Al-Ma'arif Press, 1952), among others.
15. The Arabic sources present two overlapping definitions of Kūfīc writing. The first, occurring in the earlier sources or describing early developments, refers to the mother script

- from which all subsequent Arabic scripts, whether angular or cursive, were developed. Qalqashandi, quoting an earlier source, says: "The Arabic script, which is now known as Kūfic, is the source of all contemporary pens. . . . The Kūfic script has a number of pens which can be traced to two sources: concaveness and flatness." In *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshāfi Ṣināʿat al-Inshāʾ* (Cairo: Turathuna, 1964), 3:11. The second and much later definition of Kūfic refers only to the angular script that dominated early Islamic calligraphy in Qurʾāns and monuments. This is the standard contemporary usage of the term and the one I employ in this paper.
16. Nabia Abbott, "Arabic Paleography: The Development of Early Islamic Scripts," *Ars Islamica* 8 (1941): 68–69.
  17. Abbott, "Arabic Paleography," 76.
  18. *The Koran Illuminated: A Handlist of the Korans in the Chester Beatty Library* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co., Ltd, 1967), xvii.
  19. Many of these difficulties have been discussed by Adolf Grohmann in "The Problem of Dating Early Qurans," *Der Islam* 33 (1958): 213–31. This method has been further refined by Déroche in *Les manuscrits du Coran, I*. Relying on these and other paleographic features, the author has attempted further to subdivide the well-known categories of *māʾil* (slanted script) and early Kūfic into smaller and more precise groups or families of manuscripts. But even within the central Kūfic groups (i.e., neither *māʾil* nor Eastern Kūfic), there is a remarkable degree of consistency in the letter forms and the overall appearance of the scripts.
  20. Abbott, "Arabic Paleography," 76.
  21. *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm*, ed. and tr. Bayard Dodge (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 13–15.
  22. Cited in Abbott, "Arabic Paleography," 67.
  23. *Rise*, 97.
  24. According to Abbott, "Arabic Paleography," 88, "confusion and neglect seem to have gained sway until Ibn Muqla came to the rescue of the Arabic scripts."
  25. Nabia Abbott, "The Contribution of Ibn Muqla to the North Arabian Script," *American Journal of Semitic Languages* 56 (1939): 70–83; and Edward Robertson, "Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Rahmān on Calligraphy," in *Studia Semitica et Orientalia* (Glasgow: MacLehose, Jackson and Co., 1920), 57–83.
  26. Robertson, "Ibn ʿAbd al-Rahmān," 59–60, who cites Ibn Khallikān as his source.
  27. Franz Rosenthal, "Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī on Penmanship," *Ars Islamica* 13–14 (1948): 9. Also cited in D. S. Rice, *The Unique Ibn al-Bawwāb Manuscript in the Chester Beatty Library* (Dublin: Emery Walker Ltd., 1955), 6.
  28. The method of Ibn Muqla is described in one early treatise and in a number of secondary sources. The anonymous treatise, *Risāla fī l-ḥitāba al-mansūba in Majallat Maʿhad al-Makḥṭūlāt al-ʿArabiyyah* 1, ed. M. Bahjat al-Athari (1955), describes Ibn Muqla's method in detail and with diagrams. Of the secondary sources, see: Robertson, "Ibn ʿAbd al-Rahmān"; Abbott, *Rise*, 33–38; and Safadi, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 16–18.
  29. See Safadi, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 52–77 passim, for a discussion of the six scripts.
  30. Some of these forgeries were produced within a few decades of Ibn Muqla's death, while others postdate his death by up to two centuries.
  31. The only attempt that I know of to do just that is Frances C. Edwards' unpublished master's essay, "A Study of Eastern Kūfic Calligraphy" (University of Michigan, 1981), esp. 34–60. This excellent and highly original study deliberately stays away from the legacy of Ibn Muqla and focuses instead on the two known works of ʿAlī ibn Shādhān al-Rāzi, the earliest dated semi-Kūfic (Edwards uses Eastern Kūfic instead) Qurʾān and a book on the grammarians of Baṣra. See note 47.
  32. Abbott, *Rise*, 35, presents a tentative reconstruction of Ibn Muqla's method and script. Aḥmad Muṣṭafa has written a thesis on the subject (University of Edinburgh, 1983), but it is unavailable for consultation except for some illustrations that have been published by Soucek, "Islamic Calligraphy."
  33. The term "semi-Kūfic" is something of an established error since it seems to suggest, incorrectly, a gradual softening of the original Kūfic script. Other terms for this script, such as "broken Kūfic" or "broken cursive," have been suggested recently by Estelle Whelan, "Early Islam: Emerging Patterns: 622–1050," in *Islamic Art and Patronage*, 51. I, however, find the adjective "broken" problematic in two respects: the first is that it has a somewhat pejorative tone, which can hardly be an appropriate description of Ibn Muqla's accomplishment, and the second is that it recalls an entirely different late Persian script, the *shikasta*, or "broken." The term "new Abbasid," proposed by Déroche, is perhaps the most appropriate since it seems to refer to the reforms of Ibn Muqla, who was almost certainly behind the development of this script or group of scripts.
  34. As far as I know, this connection has not before been made, although both Nabia Abbott and especially Eric Schroeder have noted the possibility of the indirect influence of Ibn Muqla on Qurʾānic writing of the tenth and eleventh centuries. See Eric Schroeder, "What Was the Badīʿ Script?" *Ars Islamica* 4 (1937): 232–48. Unfortunately, Schroeder's attempts to determine the legacy of Ibn Muqla are diminished by the small number of Qurʾānic fragments he examined and by his insistence on identifying the so-called "Badīʿ" script of Ibn Muqla. In fact, Schroeder's hypothesis was decisively refuted by M. Minovi, "The So-called Badīʿ Script," *Bulletin of the American Institute of Art and Archaeology* 5 (1939): 142–46. Schroeder actually had to retract his views in "The So-called Badīʿ Script: A Mistaken Identity," *Bulletin of the American Institute of Art and Archaeology* 5 (1939): 146–47. See also Rice, *Ibn al-Bawwāb*, 3 n. 1.
  35. Muslim scholars in particular have attributed a number of folios to the hand of Ibn Muqla, often on the basis of a marginal notation by a later owner of the manuscript. See, for example, Najī Zayn al-Dīn, *Muṣawwar al-Khaṭṭ al-ʿArabi* (Baghdad: Wizārat al-ʿIlām, 1968), 45, no. 80; Habib Fazaili, *Atlas-i Khaṭṭ* (Isfahan, 1971), 176; and Ahmed Mousa, *Zur*



- Geschichte der Islamische Buchmalerei in Aegypten* (Cairo: Government Press, 1931), 46, no. 30. More skeptically, Nabia Abbott has reproduced some folios attributed to Ibn Muqla in "Arabic Paleography," 80–81, figs. 1–2. Both the British Library and The Chester Beatty Library (Add. Ms.) have Qurʾānic fragments claiming to be in the hand of Ibn Muqla.
36. Perhaps the latest dated manuscript to adhere closely to Ibn Muqla's method is Mashhad Shrine Library, 84, dated 620/1223, a specimen that can easily be mistaken for an eleventh-century Qurʾān. See Martin Lings, *The Quranic Art of Calligraphy and Illumination* (London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1976), 19, pl. 21.
  37. David James, *Qurʾāns and Bindings from the Chester Beatty Library* (London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1980), 26.
  38. *Les manuscrits du Coran, I*, 51.
  39. See Whelan, "Writing the Word," 134 n.96, for a detailed discussion of CBL 1417. Her conclusion that its rather ungainly script "differs from 'broken Kūfic' in significant ways" is entirely in agreement with mine.
  40. In fact, Arberry, *Koran Illuminated*, 10, commented that the script of CBL 1417 "appears to have no near parallel."
  41. There was apparently a great deal of resistance to the use of these marks in the Qurʾān. Mālik, one of the early readers of the Qurʾān, was asked: "May Qurʾāns be written according to the innovated system of vocalization? He answered: "No! Only according to the original script." Translated from quotation in Theodore Noldeke, *Geschichte des Qorans*, part 3, *Die Geschichte des Korantexts*, ed. G. Bergstrasser and O. Pretzl (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1961), 20. In private correspondence, Muhammad Zakariyya supplied me with four other versions of this anecdote of Ibn Mālik, attesting to its great popularity. They all repeat more or less the same tale, but three of them add the jurist's more lenient view with regard to *muṣḥafs* written for children.
  42. See Safadi, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 13–14, for a good summary of this complicated development.
  43. This consistency notwithstanding, Edwards in "Eastern Kufic" has identified within the works of ʿAlī ibn Shādhān al-Rāzi two distinct scripts, a "monumental" script used in some titles and chapter headings and a "classical" script used for the text. The "monumental" script, with its bold strokes, high uprights, and *alifs* with a hook to the right, bears a close resemblance to the unelaborated Eastern Kūfic script, suggesting perhaps an earlier date for the origin of that script. For examples of the "monumental" script, see Salahuddin al-Munajjid, *Al-Kitāb al-ʿArabi al-Makhṭūṭ* (Cairo: Maʿhad al-Makhṭūṭāt al-ʿArabiyyah, 1960), pls. 19 and 22.
  44. Specimens of Eastern Kūfic are abundantly illustrated in Safadi, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 50ff., and elsewhere. Whether or not we accept the existence of Eastern Kūfic in the late tenth century (see previous note), it seems quite clear that this script is dependent on semi-Kūfic for all its character forms. Their differences have to do primarily with the increased size of the Eastern Kūfic script and especially its elongated uprights.
  45. Among the earliest must be CBL 3494, *Gharīb ak-Hadīth of Ibn Qutayba*, dated 279/892. Illustrated in Munajjid, *Al-Kitāb al-ʿArabi*, pl. 15.
  46. See Nabia Abbott, "A Ninth Century Fragment of the Thousand Nights," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 8, no. 3 (1949) and n. 67 below.
  47. See James, *Qurʾāns and Bindings*, 27; Fehmi Edhem Karatay, *Istanbul Üniversitesi Kutuphanesi Arapça Yazmalar Katalogu* (Istanbul: Istanbul Üniversitesi, 1953), pl. 5. In 376/986 the same scribe/calligrapher copied a text on Baṣran grammarians, *Kitāb Akhbār al-Naḥawīyyin al-Baṣriyyin*, now located at the Library of Shahid Ali, no. 1842, Istanbul. It is illustrated in Munajjid, *Al-Kitāb al-ʿArabi*, pl. 22. See also Whelan, "Writing the Word" and Edwards, "Eastern Kufic," 34ff.
  48. This intriguing connection between the format of Qurʾāns written in the *māʾil* script and that of secular manuscripts has not been explored. Although the Iḥijāzī manuscripts have been generally assumed to be earlier than Abbasid Qurʾāns, their link with lesser manuscripts may suggest a lower level of patronage or provincial origin. This would cast further doubt on the already problematic chronological distinction between these two types of manuscripts.
  49. Since very few complete Qurʾān manuscripts, with frontis- and finispieces, exist from before the middle of the tenth century, it remains uncertain whether or not they contained verse counts. Meanwhile, only one Kūfic manuscript on vellum (CBL 1404) contains a verse count, but it is a later addition. See James, *Qurʾāns and Bindings*, 23. In his most recent publication, *Qurʾāns of the Mamluks*, 24, James suggested that in at least one Kūfic Qurʾān on vellum the verse count is given on the opening illuminated folios. This is an undated manuscript in the British Library (Add. 11,735). This manuscript, however, is very clearly semi-Kūfic.
  50. *Wafīyyāt al-Aʿyān*, ed. Ihsan Abbas (Beirut: Dar Sader, 1970), 3:342.
  51. *Al-bidāya waʾl-nihāya*, 5th ed. (Beirut: Maktabat al-Maʿarif, 1983), 12:14.
  52. The most important study of this manuscript is Rice, *Ibn al-Bawwāb*. A facsimile edition of it was also made by Club du Livre Facsimile (Paris, 1972).
  53. The value of clarity in this new script has been stressed by Lings in *Quranic Art of Calligraphy*, 53. Lings' observation that the clarity of the new script corresponds to the clarity of the revelation is generally valid, except that, like much of the book, it tends to stand outside of history. One would like to know why it was specifically in the tenth and eleventh centuries that the old ambiguous scripts were replaced by the new clear ones.
  54. James, *Qurʾāns of the Mamluks*, 17.
  55. These would include the following manuscripts in the present sample: BL Or. 13002, TIM 431/2, BL Add. 7214, CBL 1430,

- TIM 449, CBL 1435. James, *Qurʾāns of the Mamluks*, 251, n. 3, mentions another related manuscript in the Library of the University of Leiden (inv.no.Cod. 437 Warn.), copied in Ghazna ca. 1050. This manuscript, *Kitāb Khalq a-Nabī wa Khulqih* by Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallah, was published by S. M. Stern, "A Manuscript from the Library of the Ghaznavid Amir ʿAbd al-Rashīd," in *Paintings from Islamic Lands*, ed. Ralph Pinder-Wilson (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1969), 7–31.
56. In fact James, *Qurʾāns of the Mamluks*, 17, has identified two groups of manuscripts from the second half of the twelfth century that begin to show divergence from the esteemed *naskh* of Ibn al-Bawwāb. The first variant is heralded by a small Syrian manuscript, now at the Keir Collection no. 27, bequeathed by Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Zanki to the *madrasa* al-Ḥanafīyya in Damascus in 1167. Another manuscript from the estate of Nūr al-Dīn exists at the Damascus Museum. Although undated and not totally identical with Keir 27, it shares with it many paleographic similarities, and the two *juzʿs* may in fact belong to the same *muṣḥaf*. The second group has long been identified by Richard Ettinghausen in "A Signed and Dated Seljuk Koran," *Bulletin of the American Institute for Persian Art and Archeology* 4, no. 2 (December 1935). This manuscript is listed tenth in table 3 above.
  57. Perhaps one of the latest and most spectacular manuscripts to emulate both the *naskh* and *thuluth* of Ibn al-Bawwāb and even the overall format of his unique Qurʾān is the Yāqūt al-Mustaʿsimi Qurʾān at the Bibliothèque Nationale (Arabe 6716). Although I have not examined this manuscript at first hand, the two recently illustrated folios in *Splendeur et Majesté: Corans de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe and Bibliothèque Nationale, 1987), 63, should suffice to underline the close similarity between the two manuscripts. This intriguing connection between the two greatest Muslim calligraphers has not yet been explored.
  58. The *thuluth* of Ibn al-Bawwāb is challenged around the end of the twelfth century by a variant originating in Afghanistan and eventually spreading to India. The outstanding manuscript TKS EH 42, dated 573/1177 and signed by Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdallah al-Ghaznawī, which is otherwise written in an excellent Eastern Kūfic, contains at least two folios (fig. 7) in this new variant. The distinct features of this script are to be found mainly in its uprights, which tend to be tall, vertical, and unpointed—quite possibly influenced by the similarly exaggerated uprights of Eastern Kūfic. A very similar style occurs in some Ghaznavid and Ghūrid monuments in Afghanistan and northern India. See, in particular, Michael J. Casimir and Bernt Glatzer, "Šāh-i Mashad, a Recently Discovered Madrasah of the Ghurid Period in Gargistan (Afghanistan)," *East and West*, n.s., 21, no. 1–2 (March–June 1971), figs. 14–19. The style, which may have deeper roots in Ghaznavid epigraphy, can also be seen in the earliest Ghūrid monuments in India, in particular the Qutb Minār.
  59. Rice, *Ibn al-Bawwāb*, 9–10.
  60. E.g., *Dīwān of Salāma ibn Jandal*, TKS B-125; Rice, *Ibn al-Bawwāb*, 17–22.
  61. Another copy of the same *Dīwān* (TIM, 2015), also bearing the signature of Ibn al-Bawwāb, has been dated by Rice to the second half of the fourteenth century; *Ibn al-Bawwāb*, 22–23. There are other more blatant forgeries of Ibn al-Bawwāb, one datable to the fourteenth century and the other even later; Rice, *Ibn al-Bawwāb*, 26–28.
  62. Muhammad ibn Ḥasan al-Ṭībī, *Aḥsan Maḥāsin Kitābat al-Kuttāb*, ed. Salahuddin al-Munajjid (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd, 1967).
  63. A. T. Welch, "Al-Ḳurʾān," *IEJ* 5:409.
  64. See Rice's brilliant discussion of this manuscript in *Ibn al-Bawwāb*, 24–26.
  65. François Déroche, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes I, 2: Les manuscrits du Coran* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1985), 121.
  66. According to James, *Qurʾāns and Bindings*, 35, "The words 'al-Kātib al-Malikī,' 'The Royal Calligrapher', imply that the calligrapher was the secretary or calligrapher of a Seljuk ruler, possibly Qillij Arslān."
  67. The use of verse counts seems to stop sometime in the thirteenth century, by which time the thorny question of *qirāʾāt* had presumably been settled. According to James, *Qurʾāns and Bindings*, 25, "By the fourteenth century . . . verse counts at the beginning of Qurʾāns in the Eastern Islamic world had almost entirely disappeared, and there are virtually no Bahri Mamluk Qurʾāns with verse counts at the front."
  68. Ernst Kühnel, *Islamische Schriftkunst* (Berlin: Heintze & Blanckertz, 1950), 23.
  69. See, meanwhile, Johannes Pedersen, *The Arabic Book*, trans. G. French (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 59–67; and C. Huart and A. Grohmann, "Kāghid," *IEJ* 4:419–20.
  70. It is perhaps in this period that the seeds of discord between scribes and Qurʾān copyists were first sown, the latter perhaps feeling threatened by the unprecedented spread of literacy. On the distinction between scribe (*nassākh* or *warrāq*) and calligrapher (*khattāt*) see Pedersen, *Arabic Book*, 43ff. and 83ff. Whelan in "Writing the Word" has further explored this distinction between the two professions, relating it to their widely divergent intellectual backgrounds and religious inclinations.
  71. Ṭībī, *Aḥsan*, 6.
  72. One excellent example of this simultaneity occurs in the Almoravid restoration of the Mosque al-Qarawiyyīn at Fez, 1135–40, where both *muqarnas* and cursive inscriptions are introduced for the first time. See Henri Terrasse, *La Mosquée al-Qarawiyyīn à Fez* (Paris: Librairie Klincksieck, 1968), pls. 51–53. See also my "The Muqarnas Dome: Its Origin and Meaning," *Muqarnas* 3 (1985): 61–74.
  73. See, in particular, Arthur Jeffery, ed., *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qurʾān* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1937), ix–x and 5–8. Jeffery (p. 8) seems to have been fully aware of the



political implications of 'Uthmān's act, proposing that it was "no mere matter of removing dialectal peculiarities in reading, but was a necessary stroke of policy to establish a standard text for the whole empire."

74. Welch, "Al-Ḳurʾān," 407.
75. Welch, "Al-Ḳurʾān," 407. The so-called "Shiʿa readings" were considered the most objectionable.
76. Welch, "Al-Ḳurʾān," 407.
77. Welch, "Al-Ḳurʾān," 408–9.
78. Welch, "Al-Ḳurʾān," 408–9; Jeffery, *Materials*, 9–10; and especially Henri Laoust, "La pensée et l'action politique d'al-Māwardī (364/450–974/1058)," *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* 36 (1968): 64–66. Ibn Muqla's deep embroilment in the politics and statecraft of the time makes it more likely that he was less a calligrapher and more the innovator of a correct method.
79. Paret, "Ibn Shanabūdh," *EF*<sup>2</sup> 3:935–36.
80. *Fihrist* 1:70–71.
81. See Laoust, "Māwardī," 50–50 passim, and George Makdisi, *Ibn ʿAqīl et la résurgence de l'islam, traditionaliste au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle, V<sup>e</sup> siècle de l'Hégire* (Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1963), 299–305.
82. Makdisi, *Ibn ʿAqīl*, 301, and Laoust, "Māwardī," 236–37.
83. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Bāqillānī, *Kitāb al-Tamhīd*, ed. R. J. McCarthy (Beirut: Institut Français, 1957).
84. Makdisi, *Ibn ʿAqīl*, 305, and Welch, "Al-Ḳurʾān," 409–10.
85. Specimens of this dispersed Qurʾān exist in numerous collections, and these have been frequently published in a number of exhibitions. See, for example, Welch, *Calligraphy*. Unfortunately, no one has attempted to reassemble all the available folios and subject them to thorough analysis. See, meanwhile, Jonathan Bloom, "Al-Maʾmun's Blue Koran?" *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* 54 (1986): 59–65, which argues against a Persian origin for this manuscript and affirms its early Fāṭimid status.
86. Welch, *Calligraphy*, 48; James, *Qurʾāns and Bindings*, 27.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Japonisme Comes to America: The Japanese Impact on the Graphic Arts 1876–1925.* By Julia Meech and Gabriel P. Weisberg. 256 pp., 192 color and black-and-white illustrations, index. New York: Henry N. Abrams, 1990. \$45.00.

*The Japan Idea: Art and Life in Victorian America.* By William Hosley. 211 pp., 29 color and 182 black-and-white illustrations, index. Hartford, Connecticut: Wadsworth Atheneum, 1990. \$27.95.

The taste for and impact of Japanese art in France has been explored in many publications and exhibitions, but far less attention has been given to this phenomenon in the United States. Historians of Japanese art frequently cite the role of Ernest Fenollosa as a scholar, that of Siegfried Bing as a dealer, and that of Charles Freer as a collector but fail to situate or interpret the activities of these men within a broader social, commercial, and aesthetic context. These two complementary volumes, one treating the graphic arts and the other the decorative arts created in the United States in response to Japanese taste, help to fill such gaps in our understanding of the diffusion of Japonisme in this country. Although American art is the focus of both pioneering studies, the issues addressed should be of considerable interest to historians of Asian art as well.

Both books accompanied exhibitions but are not traditional catalogues. *Japonisme Comes to America* was published in conjunction with an exhibition organized by Julia Meech that traveled to the Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey; the Nelson Atkins Gallery in Kansas City, Missouri; and the Setagaya Museum, Tokyo. *The Japan Idea* was published in conjunction with an exhibition held exclusively at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut. Many who would have been interested in seeing the show learned about it, by word of mouth, only after it had closed. (The catalogue is available only by mail order from the Wadsworth Atheneum.)

*Japonisme Comes to America* combines the research of two eminent scholars—Julia Meech, a specialist in Japanese art, and Gabriel Weisberg, a specialist in nineteenth-century European art. The strength of this publication owes much to this collaborative approach, which one hopes will be repeated in future studies of Japonisme. The author of *The Japan Idea* is Curator of American, English, and twentieth-century decorative arts at the Wadsworth Atheneum. Had he collaborated with, at or least consulted, a scholar with some background in Japanese art and language, he might have avoided some of the embarrassing blunders that mar his otherwise outstanding study.

The development of Japonisme in the United States is most familiar through the work of a few expatriot American artists, such as Mary Cassatt and James McNeill Whistler, who lived and painted in France, where the term “Japonisme” was coined in 1872 by the collector and critic Philippe Burty. Meech and Weisberg redress this limited picture by examining the activities of a host of American graphic artists whose prints, posters, watercolors, drawings, and photographs reflect Japanese influence. Some are still well known today, others enjoyed considerable commercial success during their lifetimes but later fell out of favor, and still others were noted primarily as teachers. For these men and women the “French connection” was less important than travel and study in Japan or visual involvement through books and woodblock prints available in the United States.

Mapping the routes by which Japonisme spread across America during the fifty-year period from 1876 until 1925 is complicated by the diversity of its sources and the nature of its transforma-

tion. The three principal routes were commerce, travel, and education. The International Expositions, particularly those held in Philadelphia in 1876 and in Chicago in 1893, and the sales and publications by dealer Siegfried Bing were especially influential in setting the stage for Japonisme in all its forms. As Weisberg notes, “What elevated Japonisme to a truly worldwide status were commercial negotiations (sometimes among several nations), trade agreements, and political machinations and pressures combined with the personal energy of two generations of entrepreneurs” (p. 18). It is not surprising that the most creative early experiments with the use of pictorial space, flat areas of color, and curvilinear rhythms typical of Japanese art are in the posters and magazine designs of Will Bradley (1868–1962) and John Sloan (1871–1951). For these and other graphic designers, Japanese prints and books offered not only models of pictorial design but models for the combination of word and image that had wide commercial applications.

The relative ease of international travel in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was also important in fueling the fascination for things Japanese. As early as 1890, *Scribner's Magazine* sent artist Robert Blum (1857–1903) to Japan to record his impressions of the country and its people. Blum returned not only with drawings and watercolors but also with photographs that he used as the basis for realistic illustrations and paintings. For all its apparent freshness and spontaneity, his work, like that of Helen Hyde, another artist who spent considerable time in Japan, was carefully contrived to present to the West an image of Japan as quaint, exotic, and backward.

The new field of art education was another route through which Japonisme was disseminated. Arthur Wesley Dow's (1857–1922) experiments with woodblock printing and pioneering efforts in art education at New York's Pratt Institute and Columbia Teachers College were particularly influential in training artists and teachers to see, use, and articulate the aesthetic theory of line, mass, and color he had formulated on the basis of his study of Japanese prints. Henry Bowie (1820–1920), the author of *On the Laws of Japanese Painting*, a how-to manual of Japanese art (published in 1911, a year before Fenollosa's *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*) was also influential in introducing the principles of Japanese art to countless professional and amateur painters. Bowie's book, which follows in the tradition of painting manuals published by Hokusai and other nineteenth-century Japanese artists, was based on years of personal study and practice in Japan. In fact, Bowie was so admired in Japan that he was among the few foreigners to participate in juried exhibitions of Nihonga painting: in 1899, he was even awarded a second-place prize. Although technically proficient, his Japanese-style compositions are of interest today only as historical footnotes. It is unfortunate, therefore, that a bland painting of a Maiko (Courtesan) by Bowie, rather than a more innovative work illustrating the fusion of Eastern and Western styles that resulted from the visual encounter with Japan, was chosen for the cover of this volume. A woodblock print by Bertha Lum, for instance, would have more accurately embodied the impact of Japonisme in turn-of-the-century American graphic arts.

Like her contemporary Lafcadio Hearn, from whose stories she often drew inspiration, Bertha Lum (1879–1954) saw Japan as a dream world that offered an escape from Western industrialized society. Yet her art, sensitively discussed by Julia Meech, embraced much more than this romantic vision. Lum had first been attracted to Japanese art through woodblock prints, which



she thought exemplified the ideal of personal craftsmanship advocated by the Arts and Crafts movement. This led her to travel to Japan in 1907, where she studied printing techniques under the guidance of Nishimura Bonkotsu. Through him, she was introduced to the work of Meiji printers such as Kobayashi Kiyochika (with whom Bonkotsu had collaborated) as well as to that of members of the *sōsaku hanga*, "creative print," movement which was just taking hold when she made her first extended visit to Japan. The breadth and uniqueness of her artistic vision can be attributed to her assimilation of these diverse influences.

While the strength of *Japonisme Comes to America* lies in its thoughtful characterization of the work of and interrelationships among artists who sought personal inspiration from Japan and its artistic legacy, that of *The Japan Ideal* lies in its provocative analysis of the social and cultural framework within which Japanese taste evolved. For Hosley, the focus is not artistic personalities but trends in popular taste. His exhibition and accompanying catalogue examine how and why, in the words of Edward Morse, the arts of Japan "at first so little understood, modified our own methods of ornamentation until frescoes and wallpapers, woodwork and carpets, Christmas cards and even railroad advertisements were decorated, modelled, and designed after the Japan style" (p. 31).

This volume exemplifies the trend in art history to study what have traditionally been considered "low arts" as a means of understanding period style. If many of the objects in the show fall into the category of bric-a-brac, it is because, as the author notes, "a room filled with carefully chosen and placed bric-a-brac is unmistakably Japanese and must be recognized as the look sought after at the height of the Japan craze" (p. 111). *The Japan Idea* embraces an array of bric-a-brac that is varied and at times startling. Many of the articles—doorknobs and latches, wall plaques, clocks, and picture frames, to name only a few—fall outside the boundaries of traditional art historical study. But it is precisely such articles that testify most vividly to the way the Japan craze affected the details of Victorian interior decor.

Women played a key role both as consumers and creators of Japanese-style art. Since the Japan craze coincided with the women's suffrage movement, it is not surprising that Japanese influence can be seen in the crafts—embroidered tablecloths, carved and hand-painted vases, and quilts—fashioned by women as a means of self-expression. One of the most interesting examples of this is the patchwork or crazy quilt, which is generally thought to be a quintessentially American art form. Hosley's comments about the patchwork quilt are characteristically insightful. Its Japanese character is suggested by the arrangement of fabric scraps in a haphazard manner reminiscent of the craze or crackle of old china—whence its name. The crazy quilt thus exemplifies the aesthetic of random occurrence and accidental effect that was at the heart of many manifestations of the Japan idea. The appearance of randomness appealed to Western viewers not only because it was so different from their own scientific tradition but because it provoked thoughts of a society where the artist was a creature of impulse, working free from all cares. As Hosley remarks, "What could be more unlike the West's tradition of rationalism and time-work discipline?" (p. 51).

The diverse objects included in the show not only support the author's contention that the decorative arts were as important as woodblock prints in the diffusion of Japanese taste; they also challenge our relatively narrow view of what Japanese taste meant to Victorian Americans. The Japanese aesthetic defined in these studies is as revealing, to quote Hosley, "for what it says about Victorian aspirations as for its teachings about Japan. . . . In essence, the Japan idea was more about confirming traditional values than creating new ones" (p. 48).

Just as the majority of the artists discussed by Meech and Weisberg have been overlooked by modern scholars, so too the majority of the decorative arts discussed by Hosley have been relegated to the basements of museums. By rediscovering and assembling a representative sampling of the Japanese art forms created, admired, and collected by turn-of-the-century Americans, these volumes not only remind us of the way modern art history has reshaped and distorted our perception of what Japan and its art have meant to Western viewers but offer a basis for reexamining this material within its proper historical context.

CHRISTINE M. E. GUTH

*Mughal Architecture: An Outline of Its History and Development (1526–1858)*. By Ebba Koch. 160 pp., glossary, map, 19 color plates, 162 black-and-white plates, plans and drawings. Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1991. \$24.95.

Despite the fame of Mughal monuments such as the white marble Taj Mahal or the Shalimar gardens of Kashmir, there are few volumes on Mughal architecture. Those that have appeared, largely in the past decade, have concentrated on a single site such as Fatehpur Sikri or even, like W. E. Begley and Z. A. Desai's *The Taj Mahal: The Illuminated Tomb*, on a sole monument. Ebba Koch is the first scholar to publish a survey of Mughal architecture. This well-illustrated volume covers Mughal construction from the time of this dynasty's inception in 1526 until its demise in 1858. The text is brief for such a vast topic, but, as the author explains in her preface, the book results from copy originally written for the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Koch states her goal succinctly: "to provide . . . concise, up-to-date information about . . . [Mughal architecture's] stylistic development and types of building" (pp. 7–8). This she successfully achieves.

The volume contains seven chapters divided along regnal lines. Her rationale for following this approach is solid for, as she argues, the Mughals, at least until the reign of Aurangzib (1658–1707), used the construction of buildings and gardens to project their imperial image. This follows well-established Islamic practice, thus placing Mughal architecture in a larger world context. Moreover, under the auspices of each ruler, the character of Mughal architecture changes subtly yet distinctly. Within each chapter Koch discusses monuments on a typological basis, with an overriding concern for stylistic continuity and developments across architectural types and periods.

The book opens with an introduction that gives a compact overview of Mughal history, administration, and political theory, commenting on their relationship to subsequent architectural developments. The second half of the introduction focuses on the stimuli that motivated these emperors to build on such a vast scale, as well as the wealth of styles utilized in construction. Koch attributes the innovative and highly creative character of Mughal architecture to its synthesis of Timurid, Indian, and Persian traditions, among others.

Koch's chapters on the first two Mughal emperors, Babur (1526–30) and Humayun (1530–43; 1555–56), reveal the extent to which these early rulers were wedded to the visual traditions of their Timurid homeland. During this period mosques, palaces, *char-bagh* gardens, pleasure pavilions, and tombs—while constructed from locally available materials and often in a style reflecting the clumsy techniques of the Delhi sultanate—were in fact modeled on Timurid prototypes. Even later Mughal

palaces—such as the well-known trabeated Panch Mahal at Fatehpur Sikri, usually assumed to be modeled on indigenous prototypes—in fact have precedents in the Humayun-period pavilion at the Vijiyamandirgarh at Bayana. Koch shows that it in turn derived from Timurid-Safawid pavilion types.

It was during Akbar's nearly fifty-year reign that Mughal architecture began truly to flourish. Tracing the continued Timurid influence on funerary and palace architecture, among other building types, Koch indicates the increasing use of uniquely Indian devices as well, for instance the red sandstone facing found almost uniformly on Akbar's imperial, as well as sub-imperial, buildings. Highly useful is her analysis of palace pavilion types reserved for imperial use alone. Equally compelling is her conclusion that "funerary and residential architecture were almost interchangeable" (p. 46). This observation, which I believe to be accurate, opens up rich grounds for potential discussion of the symbolic meaning that these building types may have held for the patron and/or viewer in contemporary Mughal India.

The first author to offer a careful stylistic analysis of the emperor Jahangir's patronage, Koch concludes that the architecture of this period is characterized by innovative vaulting techniques and highly decorated surfaces, often in the form of repeated small niches. These interior and exterior surfaces could be carved, inlaid, painted, or tiled. Tombs were built in the largest number, with their interiors frequently a variation on the Timurid-inspired ninefold type found throughout the Mughal period. Koch shows that the construction of monumental mausolea was not an imperial perquisite; rather, noble families throughout the empire constructed fine tombs in styles reflecting those current in the capitals. Also immensely important for maintaining the stability of the empire were the numerous *karwansara'i* built along major trade routes.

Koch argues that a new aesthetic developed under Shah Jahan (1628–58) essentially became the canon for all future Mughal architecture. The shift included a move away from the highly ornate surfaces of Jahangiri architecture to clean, uncluttered lines with an emphasis on uniformity and symmetry. Increasingly, white marble became the preferred medium for palaces and mosques, while forms such as the European-inspired baluster column and *bangla* canopy were used on Shah Jahan's palace pavilions to assert his political and spiritual authority. Koch has earlier published a more elaborated version of some material in this and previous chapters, but here for the first time she presents an important analysis of the Shahjahanabad fort's overall plan and design. This allows her to determine the unit of measurement used in the Shahjahan *gaz* or *zira'*.

In the last portion of the text, Koch addresses Shah Jahan's influence on the architecture of the later Mughals. She concludes that the influence of the Mughal style was so pervasive that it is seen even in structures as far afield as the royal pavilion at Brighton.

Koch's text is profusely illustrated. The inclusion of color plates makes the book especially appealing. In addition, she has prepared plans, mostly original, to complement the text. The author's glossary, based on careful reading of Mughal sources, is invaluable for the study of Mughal monuments.

Koch commences her book by stating that her goal is to stimulate further research and discussion on Mughal architecture. This she has done by tantalizing us with a taste of riches. This study must be read by any scholar interested in Islamic or Indian art.

CATHERINE B. ASHER

*Leaves from the Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th–12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy.* By Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington. 616 pp., 165 illustrations, 46 in color, appendixes, bibliography, glossary, maps. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990. \$50.00 (paper only).

Here is an exception to the generalization that museum exhibitions seldom provide the opportunity to make important scholarly statements. The curator, of course, is restricted to works that happen to be available, not necessarily those that might best illustrate a point. What exhibitions do, however, is bring together original works of art that are normally dispersed and thus permit comparative study otherwise not possible.

Why, then, is *Leaves from the Bodhi Tree* so important? There are much larger existing collections of Pāla sculpture, for example, in the Patna Museum; the Indian Museum, Calcutta; or the Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi. But all of those collections, and others too, are almost exclusively regional, while *Leaves* draws upon sculptures and paintings from the entire Pāla realm. And the Huntingtons, in preparing the exhibition, conceived Pāla not just as the dynasty's political arena but as the larger cultural realm that drew inspiration from Pāla India.

As important as the dazzling exhibition (even the black stone sculptures forming the bulk of the show appeared magnificent in the superb installation I saw at the University of Chicago) is the voluminous catalogue. A fifty-two-page introductory text provides excellent background on the Pāla dynasty, the religious environment, and the art itself. This is followed by a detailed catalogue of sixty bronze and stone sculptures as well as manuscript painting from the Indian subcontinent. The figures present a comprehensive picture of Pāla art both chronologically and iconographically. I might be inclined to dispute the date assigned a few of the figures. For example, an Umā-Maheśvara and a Sūrya, both from the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, are here dated seventh century, though I would assign them to the eighth century. But the absence of dated eastern Indian images from the seventh and eighth centuries makes it difficult to defend either position rigorously. The catalogue entries usually attempt to assign a rather precise provenance to the works, generally in terms of modern districts. The case is almost always well made, and I would dispute none of the suggestions. Still, we need to understand better the area in which a particular style prevailed or, to think less passively, the area in which the works of a particular group of artists were distributed.

Subsequent sections of the catalogue, at least by implication, ask about the extent to which the Pāla realm served as center to a periphery in other parts of Asia: Southeast Asia, Nepal, Tibet, and China. The catalogue's introduction (p. 69) notes that, as a corollary to the transmission of Buddhism, much of Pāla-period culture was also transplanted to these regions. That may be, but the works selected and the subsequent text of the volume suggest that the transplanted culture often flourished quite independently of the source. When introducing the art of Nepal, for example, the Huntingtons note (p. 257) that it cannot be viewed simply "as a northward extension of Indic cultural expression." I am very much inclined to agree and feel that an important contribution of the exhibition, as important as depicting the international Pāla legacy, is the illustration of significant distinctions among the forms in each of the regions. Old notions such as Indo-Javanese may be laid to rest as we see how ideas that may have traveled with Buddhist pilgrims are given independent life when they are fostered by a culture with a longstanding indigenous heritage. We might ask, finally, whether the center/periphery notions inherent in a world system sustained by economic relationships pertains when the links are primarily religious.



In sum, this is an important volume, extremely well illustrated with both photographs and maps. The catalogue entries are thorough; simple description generally has been avoided in favor of informative analysis. And the introductory essays for each region are especially illuminating. They have much substance for the informed scholar but also serve as excellent introductions that one might have a student read.

FREDERICK M. ASHER

*Taj Mahal: The Illumined Tomb: An Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Mughal and European Documentary Sources.* Compiled and translated by W. E. Begley and Z. A. Desai. liv + 320 pp., 22 color plates, 168 black-and-white illustrations. Seattle: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, distributed by The University of Washington Press, 1989. \$45.00 (hardback), \$29.95 (paper).

This book is an excellent compendium of source materials, both textual and visual, for the study of the Taj Mahal, the single most famous monument of Mughal India. Intended to stimulate and facilitate further research on this important structure, the volume consists of a wide variety of documents translated into English and supplemented with color and black-and-white photographs, plans, and drawings. This rich anthology is the result of a collaboration between two scholars of international repute, who are well suited to assemble such a corpus. Wayne Begley, whose recent work on the Taj has highlighted the programmatic nature of the monument's epigraphy, contributed the introduction and commentary; Z. A. Desai, expert on subcontinent architectural inscription, acted as the primary translator. The results of their joint efforts will benefit anyone interested in Mughal architecture and society in general and the Taj in particular.

The book begins with Begley's introduction, wherein he describes and contextualizes the source materials that follow. Here the reader will find a general discussion of the court histories of Shah Jahan, with remarks about the individual texts and their authors; comments about the Taj Mahal as it is reflected in official documents; a discussion of the inscriptions on the building and the calligrapher credited with that epigraphic program, Amanat Khan; an account of the architect, Ustad Ahmad Lahori, and the supervisors of the construction; and an analysis of the Taj as it is represented by seventeenth-century European travelers. This is followed by a detailed chronology of the Taj Mahal, which spans the period from the births of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal (1000/1592 and 1001/1593, respectively) to the death of Jahanara, the daughter of Shah Jahan, in 1092/1681. Thereafter come the translations, each prefaced by brief comments elucidating its particular character or significance.

Obviously, the selection of texts is critical to the ultimate utility of such an anthology, and the authors have tried to be definitive and humanistic in their approach. The documents comprise all known seventeenth-century sources for the building as well as all of the inscriptions on the Taj itself and those of other relevant monuments. Many of them have not been previously translated or even readily available in the original language; others are familiar but newly translated for this volume. The results are fluid and literate renditions of often florid, convoluted writing styles. Some of the European texts are included in both original and English versions. Additionally, a supplementum is available for specialists wanting to read the Mughal materials in the original Persian. The authors have thus given the reader a considerably

expanded corpus of material with which to work.

In addition to providing all the available facts and figures, as well as the fantasies, surrounding the construction of the Taj Mahal itself, these documents also situate the Taj Mahal in its social context. Two *firmans*, for example, testify to the power wielded by Mumtaz Mahal and Jahanara (wife and daughter of Shah Jahan), though they do not address topics of architectural significance. The *waqf* document of the approximately contemporaneous mosque of Wazir Khan in Lahore elucidates that critical institution of endowment, in lieu of the original *waqf* for the Taj itself. Even the diachronic organization of part 1 of the book, which follows the sequence of festivals surrounding the death of Mumtaz Mahal and its subsequent commemoration as well as other activities of Shah Jahan's entourage, implicitly conjures up the ritualized pageantry of this complex and courtly period in Indian history.

The organization of this book, with its emphasis on certain key individuals, its careful presentation of Qur'anic epigraphy, and its emphasis on the emperor Shah Jahan, is consistent with Begley's prior publications on the Taj Mahal and Mughal architecture. A particularly interesting new aspect of this work is his discussion of the architect Ustad Ahmad and of his sons, who carry on the family profession of design, engineering, and mathematical skills. Such craft genealogies,<sup>1</sup> of which we are becoming increasingly aware, are critical to an organic understanding of the evolution of architectural form and the maintenance of tradition.

In light of the potential of such a compendium of source materials for the study of Mughal architecture and society, therefore, it is frustrating to encounter its complete lack of indexing. A second cause of frustration for this reader was the relative neglect of the visual component of the book. The images are of uniformly high quality and represent considerable work to collect and arrange, but they are not parenthetically cited in the course of the text, nor is their inclusion always explained.

Despite this minor shortcoming, the combination of certain texts and visual materials is a particularly useful part of this volume. The most deliberate pairing of text and image occurs in the section devoted to Qur'anic inscription. Here the reader can view the epigraphic appearance of a given passage and read its translation without turning pages. This facilitates the analysis of conceptual unity in the epigraphic program.

Elsewhere the detailed description of the completed tomb written on the occasion of the twelfth 'Urs, or anniversary of death, along with photographs and plans of the extant structures, underwrites the appended reconstruction of the basic grid format of the whole Taj complex. The primacy of the grid plan and the mathematical basis of architecture are further reiterated in the choice of supplemental visual materials, including an eighteenth-century grid plan of a Jaipur palace and the familiar Baburnamah painting of a builder holding a grid plan along with pages of mathematical texts. Examining this corpus of materials, correlating it with recent analyses of Akbar's Fatepur Sikri<sup>2</sup> and Shahjahanabad<sup>3</sup> and comparing it with what is now known of the working practices of Timurid architects<sup>4</sup> may enable future researchers to establish precisely how Mughal design practices differ from those of their forebears in Central Asia.

Such posed questions are perhaps the best testament to Begley and Desai's accomplishment with this volume. While they make no claim to writing the definitive analysis of the Taj Mahal, they have certainly laid the groundwork for such an undertaking. Indeed, they have provided us with a superb anthology, which will undoubtedly be the primary source for research on the Taj Mahal for years to come.

## Notes

1. E.g., Priscilla Soucek, "Persian Artists in Mughal India: Influences and Transformations," *Muqarnas* 7 (1987): 166–81.
2. Atilio Petruccioli, "The Process Evolved by the Control Systems of Urban Design in the Mogul Epoch in India: The Case of Fathpur Sikri," *Environmental Design*, no. 0 (1986): 18–27.
3. Ebba Koch, *Mughal Architecture* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1991), 110.
4. Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilbur, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 137–58.

HOLLY EDWARDS

*Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections.* By Jessica Rawson. Volume 2 of *Ancient Chinese Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*. Vol. 2A: Introduction; Vol. 2B: Catalogue. 776 pp., numerous color and black-and-white illustrations, maps, character glossary, bibliography, index. Cambridge, MA: Arthur M. Sackler Foundation, Washington, DC, and the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, 1990. Distributed by Harvard University Press. \$200 boxed set.

This is the second volume in the projected three-volume catalogue of the collection of ancient Chinese bronzes amassed by the late Arthur M. Sackler. Like the first, Robert Bagley's *Shang Ritual Bronzes*, which appeared in 1987, this is a sumptuously produced book with full plate color illustrations of each of the bronzes, together with extensively researched short illustrated essays placing each piece in its archaeological and typological context. The catalogue is preceded by a long introduction, which, to a greater degree even than in the first volume, is used as a pretext for a comprehensive account of bronze casting of the period.

Bronzes of Western Zhou have been poorly served by Western art historians. Loehr virtually ignored the period, while Watson, after speculating on the origins of bizarre features of the earliest phase, couched his account in terms of a gradual decline. Even Chinese archaeologists and historians, who have long recognized the importance of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, have generally little positive to say about the decoration or forms of the bronzes. Rawson's account now shows the Western Zhou period to have been one of pivotal, even revolutionary importance in the history of the craft. Her major contributions may be summarized as follows: she lucidly unravels the disparate strands that existed in early Western Zhou bronze casting and that have made it so puzzling; she charts sweeping changes that occurred in the ritual bronze repertoire, as the range of types inherited from Shang was replaced by an almost totally new one, which formed the basis for bronze casting down to the end of the fifth century B.C.; and thirdly, she shows that certain categories of middle-late Western Zhou decoration also broke with the principles of design inherited from Shang and were therefore truly innovative.

To elucidate the progress of the revolution in the ritual repertoire, Rawson adopts an approach to the bronzes that, with few exceptions, has been neglected by Western specialists in the

field. Whereas bronzes have usually been considered as examples of an individual typological sequence, Rawson views them as components of a ritual set. She defines these sets as "a regularly recurring group of vessel types required . . . to perform the customary ritual food and wine offerings to the ancestors" (p. 98). Such an approach is, of course, not entirely new: it is based on the methods of Chinese archaeologists such as Guo Baojun and the textual studies of Gao Ming and Yu Weichao. Even in the West, it is not unparalleled: Robert Thorp has recently emphasized the importance of vessel assemblages and sets. What is, however, unprecedented is Rawson's application of this methodology diachronically to elucidate the degree to which the repertoire changed over the whole period, as well as the emphatic way she articulates the cumulative significance of the changes that she charts so exhaustively.

Rawson shows (p. 30ff.) that the range of early Western Zhou vessels represents essentially a continuation of the preceding period, but she argues that a shift towards food vessels, already discernible in late Shang, now gathered further momentum. Large early Western Zhou *ding*, for instance, are adduced as testifying to the type's enhanced importance. This observation seems questionable since some of the largest Shang vessels are rectangular *ding*. *Gui* grain basins had already become numerically important in late Shang, but their new prestige was emphasized by their acquisition of an integrally cast square pedestal, which lent the vessel a much more powerful presence. Rawson traces the origin of this hitherto unexplained feature to independent pedestals or stands in stone or wood found in a number of Shang-period tombs. Pedestals based on these, she argues, were first cast integrally with vessels in the southern bronze industries, whence the feature was adopted into mainstream casting at the beginning of Western Zhou.

Rawson shows that the south and other peripheral areas were important sources for a number of decorative features found on the flamboyant bronzes of early Western Zhou. Previous writers such as Loehr and Watson have suggested that the flamboyant bronzes reflect a predynastic Zhou style, but Rawson points out that Shang-period bronzes excavated from sites in the Zhou heartlands in western Shaanxi hardly support this theory. Instead, she convincingly argues that some of these features, most notably the hooked flanges and coiled dragons, were ultimately derived from Shang-period bronzework of Hunan. A crucial intermediary in this transmission was the province of Sichuan, which has yielded *lei* vessels whose hooked flanges retain the vestiges of birds. These in turn were derived from more explicit bird flanges of Hunan.

The coexistence of much simpler bronzes alongside the flamboyant group has long puzzled writers on the subject. Rawson explains this dichotomy by identifying the antecedents of the simpler pieces in late Shang, which witnessed a move toward simple, rounded vessels, often decorated in revivals of Loehr's Styles 1–3, as well as stereotyped versions of his Styles 4 and 5. These two strands persisted into early Western Zhou, and it was their intermingling with the flamboyant bronzes that produced the more homogenous styles current during the following decades.

The way in which motifs could be manipulated is one engrossing theme explored in this book. Thus, the large plumed birds whose sudden appearance defines the beginning of middle Western Zhou are shown to be conglomerates whose sources lay in various species of preexisting small birds, some of which in turn borrowed elements of their anatomies from dragons. Even as the plumed bird was being constituted, Rawson shows how its anatomy could be distorted, as the tail of the bird was transposed above the wing in order to fit the motif into its allotted space.



And its gradual dissolution into long ribbons marks a shift in emphasis from motif to pattern, which was to gain momentum during the rest of the period. But notwithstanding its gradual abstraction, inasmuch as the motif was still confined within the compartments defined by mold divisions, it still falls within the Shang tradition. It was the wave pattern that Rawson, following Bagley, singles out as marking the crucial break with the principles of decorative design inherited from Shang. This pattern, she demonstrates, was formed by linking pendant triangles common on *yu* into a continuous undulating ribbon. Unlike earlier curvilinear designs, the wave pattern ignored the mold divisions, instead forming a continuous frieze around the circumference of the vessel. This pattern was thus the point of departure for the banded layout of decoration, which became popular during the Eastern Zhou period.

Rawson defers her main discussion of vessel shapes until the chapter on late Western Zhou, since it was at the beginning of this period that the new repertoire was firmly established. As the old wine vessels were finally eliminated, they were replaced by a whole new array of mostly food vessels, many based on types preexisting in other materials such as ceramics, basketry, and lacquered wood. No less important was a new standardization of ritual vessel sets. Chinese authorities have argued that sets of *ding* existed as early as the beginning of Western Zhou, but, as Rawson observes, in metropolitan casting it was not until late Western Zhou that the form and decoration of vessels constituting a set were regularly made to match each other. Rawson points out that this fashion had a precedent further west at Baoji in the old Zhou heartlands and argues that from there matching sets were introduced to the Zhou capitals, along with certain new vessel types and chimes of bells. Indeed, although Rawson does not suggest this, the fashion for sets of vessels may have originally been inspired by bells since sets containing matching *ding* in graduated sizes seem to mimic the visual effect of chimes of bells.

Rawson argues that the final elimination of the old types and the establishment of the new ones does not represent a random shift of emphasis but rather a deliberate and perhaps centralized decision to make a final break with Shang vessel forms. This argument becomes all the more persuasive in light of the contrast that Rawson draws with the southeast, where the older metropolitan forms survived into Eastern Zhou. If there was a conscious decision to eliminate Shang forms—and this would be consistent with cryptic textual references to reforms of the rituals—then, as Rawson suggests, the influence from the Baoji region may reflect a search for what were believed to be ancient Zhou practices.

The account of late Western Zhou decoration focuses on the origins and development of interlacy. Previous authorities have noted its appearance in late Western Zhou and its significance for the history of ornament in the subsequent period, but Rawson is the first writer convincingly to identify its sources in

other media. Interestingly, in this account jade carving of the middle Western Zhou period is seen as the primary inspiration, while plaited organic materials such as bamboo and leather, which elsewhere in Rawson's writings are identified as additional sources of interlaced design, are here discussed mainly in terms of their contribution to the rise of openwork decoration in bronze.

Rawson's exposition of the origins and development of individual vessel types and motifs is often amplified in the catalogue entries. The discussions of the permutations of the *long* dragon and its interaction with the tiger motif under no. 93, the origins of the high-footed *gui* under no. 52, and of the late Western Zhou *gui* under no. 56 are all particularly illuminating. It is unfortunate, however, that the discussion of bells is relegated largely to the catalogue section since the innocent reader could mistakenly conclude that bells remained peripheral to Western Zhou bronze casting, whereas in fact they came to challenge the importance of vessels themselves in the ritual repertoire.

In any work of this scale, there will be a few points of detail with which a reviewer might take issue: despite the present lack of archaeological evidence, it still seems possible that Zhou bronze casting was beginning to diverge from that of Shang before the conquest (Can, for instance, the *Li gui*, cast within days of the overthrow of Shang, really have been the first Zhou *gui* on a pedestal?); it would have been useful to have had some discussion of the inscription of the *li*, no. 29, since, if genuine (and Rawson does not dispute its authenticity), it may attest to the existence of bronze casting in the state of Lu during Western Zhou; the authenticity of the *Ge Bo gui* (fig. 94) seems doubtful to this reviewer.

There is a more serious criticism that will be leveled against this book and one against which it should be defended; namely, that the account is essentially descriptive rather than explanatory, in the sense that the social and historical background is given only fleeting consideration (although certainly not completely ignored). Such themes as the ritual context in which the bronzes were used and the religious meaning of the motifs are deliberately excluded from the discussion (p. 22). The limited aims of this work thus fly in the face of the current trend toward contextual, interdisciplinary studies. In the field of Chinese bronzes there is a strong justification for Rawson's cautious approach: as the spate of recent speculations on Shang art have clearly revealed, until the chronological development and geographical affiliations of motifs are correctly understood, interpretive studies may be based on wildly unrepresentative material. This study, despite its self-imposed limitations, represents a major contribution to our knowledge of the period and will undoubtedly remain the standard work on Western Zhou bronzes for many years to come.

COLIN MACKENZIE

*Coming in Ars Orientalis*

A Rejoinder to Vidya Dehejia's "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems"

by Susan L. Huntington

Reevaluating the Date of the "Buyid" Silks

by Sheila S. Blair, Jonathan M. Bloom, and Anne E. Wardwell

Realm of the Immortals: Paintings Decorating the Jade Hall of the Northern Sung

by Scarlett Jang

A special issue on premodern Islamic palaces

guest edited by Gülru Necipolğlu and Margaret Sevcenko







# ARS ORIENTALIS

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EDITORIAL STATEMENT: *Ars Orientalis* solicits scholarly manuscripts on the art and archaeology of Asia, including the ancient Near East and the Islamic world. The journal welcomes a broad range of themes and approaches. Articles of interest to scholars in diverse fields or disciplines are particularly sought, as are suggestions for occasional thematic issues and reviews of important books in Western or Asian languages. Brief research notes and responses to articles in previous issues of *Ars Orientalis* will also be considered. Submissions must be in English, with all non-English quotations provided in translation. Authors are asked to follow *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 13th ed. A style sheet is also available from the managing editor. With this issue *Ars Orientalis* begins to integrate Chinese and Arabic characters into the text.

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## CONTENTS

### ARTICLES

- SHEILA S. BLAIR, JONATHAN M. BLOOM,  
AND ANNE E. WARDWELL . . . . .  
*Richmond, New Hampshire; Richmond, New  
Hampshire; and Cleveland Museum of Art*
- ELEANOR SIMS. . . . .  
*New York, New York, and London, England*
- GEORGE T. BEECH. . . . .  
*Western Michigan University*
- SCARLETT JANG . . . . .  
*Williams College*
- SAMUEL K. PARKER . . . . .  
*University of Washington, Tacoma*
- SUSAN L. HUNTINGTON . . . . .  
*Ohio State University*
- VIDYA DEHEJIA. . . . .  
*Columbia University*
- Reevaluating the Date of the "Buyid" Silks by Epigraphic and  
Radiocarbon Analysis . . . . . 1
- The Illustrated Manuscripts of Firdausi's *Shāhnāma*  
Commissioned by Princes of the House of Tīmūr. . . . . 43
- The Eleanor of Aquitaine Vase: Its Origins and History  
to the Early Twelfth Century. . . . . 69
- Realm of the Immortals: Paintings Decorating the Jade Hall  
of the Northern Song . . . . . 81
- The Matter of Value Inside and Out:  
Aesthetic Categories in Contemporary Hindu Temple Arts. . . . . 97
- Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems: Another Look. . . . . 111
- Rejoinder to Susan Huntington. . . . . 157

### BOOK REVIEWS

- MELINDA TAKEUCHI. . . . .  
*Stanford University*
- SUSAN B. DOWNEY. . . . .  
*University of California, Los Angeles*
- M. B. GARRISON . . . . .  
*Trinity University*
- ELEANOR MANNIKKA. . . . .  
*University of Michigan*
- RICHARD VINOGRAD. . . . .  
*Stanford University*
- RICHARD EDWARDS. . . . .  
*University of Michigan*
- Masterpieces of Japanese Screen Painting:  
The American Collections*, by Miyeko Murase . . . . . 159
- Akten des XIII. Internationalen Kongresses für klassische  
Archäologie, Berlin 1988* . . . . . 160
- Ein Weltwunder der Antike. Persepolis*, by Leo Trümpelmann . . . . . 161
- The Integrative Art of Modern Thailand*, by Herbert P. Phillips . . . . . 164
- Master of the Lotus Garden: The Life and Art of Bada Shanren*, by  
Wang Fangyu, Richard M. Barnhart, and Judith G. Smith, ed. . . . . 165
- The Painting of T'ang Yin*, by Anne De Coursey Clapp . . . . . 166





# REEVALUATING THE DATE OF THE "BUYID" SILKS BY EPIGRAPHIC AND RADIOCARBON ANALYSIS

By SHEILA S. BLAIR, JONATHAN M. BLOOM,  
AND ANNE E. WARDWELL

A PARTICULARLY VEXING PROBLEM IN ISLAMIC ART IS THE date of manufacture of the group of silks often identified with the medieval site of Rayy in northern Iran and the patronage of the Buyid and Seljuq dynasties. After their appearance in the 1920s and 1930s, many of these so-called "Buyid silk" textiles were acquired by major museums and private collectors, notably the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Abegg-Stiftung in Riggisberg, near Berne, Switzerland. They have been the subject of many important exhibitions, publications, and symposia and have been examined according to many art-historical and scientific criteria. In February 1989 the Cleveland Museum requested a report on the inscriptions on the entire corpus of textiles. That report noted inconsistencies between the inscribed texts and the purported date of the textiles, and the Museum consequently decided to send samples of many of them for carbon-14 testing by accelerator mass spectrometry. The carbon-14 testing revealed that the textiles could be assigned to four chronological groups ranging from the medieval to the modern period. The present article sums up the project in five parts: 1) a history of the problem, 2) a report on the epigraphy, 3) a report on the carbon-14 dating, 4) a discussion of conclusions and implications for further work, and 5) an appendix that catalogues the seventeen carbon-dated pieces, each including a photograph, technical analysis, and epigraphical documentation.

## *The "Buyid" Silks*

Several silk textiles and other objects dating from the medieval Islamic period were excavated in late 1924 and early 1925 at a site known as Bibi Shahr Banu near Rayy south of Tehran in Iran.<sup>1</sup> Some of the textiles quickly passed into private hands in Tehran, and, as early as March 1925, dealers in Paris began to offer some of them to British, French, and American museums and collectors. Although several of these textiles were published following their acquisition by

museums,<sup>2</sup> it was not until the 1931 International Exhibition of Persian Art at the Royal Academy in London that medieval Persian textiles truly came to public notice.<sup>3</sup> Some twenty of the scores of textiles and rugs exhibited were described as "Seljuq" or attributed to Iran in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Six of them were said to have been found at Rayy, and two of these were specifically identified as coming from the site of Bibi Shahr Banu. They were lent to the exhibition by six museums, two dealers, and several private collectors, some of whom chose to remain anonymous. Other pieces on display included silks that had been in European churches and collections for centuries, such as the tenth-century Shroud of St. Josse, which had been found in a reliquary in St. Josse-sur-Mer, Pas de Calais. Reviews of the exhibition underscored the importance of these silks. For example, the foremost expert on Arabic epigraphy, Gaston Wiet, signaled that no. 73, a textile made up into a tunic, was inscribed with the name of the Buyid prince Bahā' al-Dawla (r. 998–1012).<sup>4</sup>

Interest in medieval Persian textiles, fueled by the Persian exhibition in London, was sustained when in 1935–36 seven more examples were displayed in the exhibitions accompanying the Third International Congress for Persian Art and Archaeology in Leningrad. In 1937 the textile chapters of *A Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present*, edited by Arthur Upham Pope, the expert on Persian art, were completed.<sup>5</sup> Phyllis Ackerman, Pope's former student, associate, wife, and assistant editor of the *Survey*, was responsible for most of the account of the textile arts (pp. 1995–2256), particularly the lengthy sections dealing with the history and weaving techniques of textiles from the early Islamic and Seljuq periods. She contrasted the "embarrassing richness" of documentary information about the medieval textile industry in Iran with the scanty physical remains so far discovered. Even Persian provenance, she suggested, was not sufficient to assure a Persian attribution, for only some of the "fifty odd patterned pieces, in addition to plain



and striped silks, . . . excavated in 1925 in a group of tombs in the vicinity of Rayy" were surely Persian.<sup>6</sup> Persian textiles could be recognized by examining four kinds of evidence: technical identity with established Persian types of the Sassanian period; stylistic relation to the textiles attributed to Sassanian Persia; a "constitutional" similarity with other contemporary works of Persian art, particularly representations of textiles on luster-painted and enameled ceramics; and "fourth and most certain, but in the nature of the case most limited, documentation by inscription."<sup>7</sup> Although inscriptions appear on many of the silks, they rarely give historical information but instead express only conventional good wishes. Not enough was yet known about the stylistic evolution of the Arabic scripts used to identify places and dates of manufacture. She proceeded, therefore, to use stylistic and technical criteria to connect specific textiles to about twelve centers of production known from the sources. Fifty-two different textiles (one tapestry-woven, one dyed) were published in the *Survey*, and by 1940 three additional textiles had come out, of which two were shown in the exhibition of Persian art in New York.<sup>8</sup>

Most of the silks that had appeared on the market in the 1920s or been exhibited in the 1931 London exhibition can be traced to Rowland Read ('Abd al-Rida'/Abdurreza Khan), an Englishman working for the Treasury General of the Iranian government; a certain Mr. Acheroff; and J.-K. Nazare-Aga, a Paris dealer in Persian antiquities—all of whom had access to the silks immediately after their discovery in Iran.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, no clear provenance can be established for the other silks that appeared on the market in the 1930s, when they were offered for sale by Pope and other dealers.

In January 1943 Pope and Ackerman published an unusually large double-faced silk dated 384/994, along with an account of the finds at Rayy, in the *Illustrated London News*.<sup>10</sup> They again specified that more than fifty superlative examples had been accidentally uncovered, one of the "momentous discoveries in the history of textiles." Their account of the discovery is dramatic and romantic: grave robbers in search of gold had only found rags, but fortunately most of these had later been recognized and acquired by museums—five by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, four by the Musée de Cluny in Paris, and practically all the rest by museums in the United States, particularly Yale University and the Textile Museum in Washington. Doubt was

expressed, however, by leading experts of Islamic art, such as Mehmet Aga-Oglu and Maurice Dimand, Curator of Islamic Art at the Metropolitan Museum, who challenged the authenticity of the eight silk textiles Pope published in his *Masterpieces of Persian Art* (New York, 1945).<sup>11</sup>

The controversy erupted in 1947 when Gaston Wiet published *Soieries Persanes*, describing eighteen silks from an anonymous collection.<sup>12</sup> It was later revealed that the textiles had first been acquired by "a Mr. Mattossian, a wealthy Cairene tobacco merchant who traveled frequently to Persia, collect[ing] objects for his own interest and apparently . . . also not averse to selling some of them occasionally." During the war the textiles were in Cairo, where Wiet studied them, and then Mme. Paul Mallon brought them to New York.<sup>13</sup> Wiet had been introduced to medieval Persian textiles some twenty years earlier, well before the London exhibition, by Paul Mallon and his wife, who had shown him first a large Persian silk and then, some time later, the tunic exhibited in London that Wiet had identified as Buyid. In contrast to Phyllis Ackerman, Wiet was an epigrapher and historian, not an art historian, so his publication was primarily concerned with the inscriptions and the historical context into which these silks could be placed. Wiet read the inscriptions on the pieces and dated all but two to the Buyid and Seljuq periods. The book also included chapters on the history of Iran in the Buyid period and the city of Rayy, where the silks were supposedly found.

Wiet's book was reviewed four years later in *Ars Islamica*, the prestigious predecessor of *Ars Orientalis*, by Florence Day, formerly Curator of Islamic Art at the Textile Museum and by then Assistant Curator of Near Eastern Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.<sup>14</sup> This long and vitriolic review, prefaced—unusually—by an editorial disclaimer, challenged virtually everything Wiet had written about the silks, although it concluded with a warm assessment of the "many fascinating points of epigraphy and history [Wiet had] discussed with great penetration." Day had had occasion to study the silks since two had been acquired by the Textile Museum, three more there had been cut from the same cloth as those in Wiet's book, and she had seen several more in the collections of Mme. Mallon and Arthur Upham Pope in New York and in the Hobart Moore Memorial Collection at Yale University. Day first criticized Wiet for blindly accepting that the silks came from Bibi Shahr Banu, for "the story of

finding the silks near Ray is ingenious romance, with the saint's name used to add an aura of sanctity, as well as to allay a major element of doubt."<sup>15</sup> She then corrected Wiet's reading of some of the inscriptions and criticized his interpretation of the texts, which she noted were peculiar in content, "contrary to protocol, and mention . . . unidentifiable 'historical' names."<sup>16</sup> The unknown provenance and history of these textiles made them unacceptable historical documents. Day then observed that Wiet had failed to compare the unknown iconography and style of the pieces with the known features of genuine works in a sophisticated and logical manner. Examining three of the silks (Wiet IX, XIV, and I), Day demonstrated that their iconography and style were inconsistent with Wiet's attributions. She showed that the two "Sassanian" silks were not and that a number of the Buyid ones were actually Seljuk. In addition, she felt that the textiles were technically suspect. Some were missing the natural signs of wear, age, and burial, while others (such as Wiet IX) were yards long, as if they had just come off the loom. Finally, the dull color schemes of the doubtful pieces compared unfavorably with those of such genuine silks as the St. Josse Shroud, which has distinct, clear, and contrasting colors.

Wiet was given the opportunity to respond to this review in the same issue of *Ars Islamica*.<sup>17</sup> Shocked at Day's vitriolic tone, he had suspected that something was amiss while correcting the proofs of the book during the 1948 congress of Orientalists in Paris. There he heard rumors that certain Americans claimed the fabrics he was publishing were gross fakes. He noted that Day was now a curator at the Metropolitan Museum, which had never acquired one fragment, while the Textile Museum had acquired thirteen silks.<sup>18</sup> Pope may have been overly lyrical about the finds, Wiet wrote, but this was well within scholarly license. Wiet supposed that Day was unfamiliar with the ways of the Orient, where many genuine objects have been clandestinely excavated and later welcomed into museum collections. He countered Day's criticism of the condition of the pieces with the example of the finds in Tutankhamun's tomb, which many had declared false, and maintained that the St. Josse Shroud could not provide the basis for establishing the style of a period because it only represents one particular style. Wiet accused Day of exaggerating and quoting him out of context. To Day's insistence that the art historian must always ask

"Is this object consistent with the style of the period and of the civilization to which it is attributed?" he replied that very little is known about Buyid style and civilization. Wiet believed that forgers never invented; they interpreted and mixed elements already known, so the omission of the *basmala* or the use of the names of unknown Shi'ite patrons should be interpreted as signs of authenticity. A gulf separated Wiet from Day, for his belief in the authenticity of the textiles was unshaken by her accusations. He closed with a statement of openness to further "serious and constructive" criticism.

Day then replied briefly to Wiet's response. Not all the silks were fakes, she wrote, but it was impossible "that genuine and doubtful objects can have been found or excavated at the same spot; thus the account of the finding circulated by Mr. Pope, Mr. Read, and 'un autre fouilleur' is quite meaningless." "The heart of the matter is style. The very ugliness of these silks, and their peculiar style, completely unrelated to Sasanian art, or to Islamic art either before or after the Buwayhid period . . . first aroused my doubts." She refused to admit Wiet's analysis of the faker's mind, maintaining that the silks, the silver salver bearing the name of Alp Arslan, a wooden coffin, and a candlestick were all the work of one designer. "Perhaps this innocent man, exploited by the dealers, is now suffering the pangs of being an unrecognized artist."<sup>19</sup>

The Fourth Congress of the International Association for Iranian Art and Archaeology was convened in the United States in late April 1960. In the sessions "early manuscript illuminations, such as those of the recently discovered *Andarz Nama*, were examined in detail by linguistic, literary and artistic specialists, while the Seljuk woven silks, thought by some the most beautiful of all comparable fabrics, were analyzed as to their techniques, designs and historical significance."<sup>20</sup> The *Andarz Nama*, which had appeared in 1950 purporting to be the earliest Persian illustrated manuscript, was demonstrated by several scholars to be a crude fake.<sup>21</sup> The "Seljuk" textiles were also "eagerly discussed," for the proceedings of the Congress, published in a fourteenth volume of the *Survey*, included chapters by Ernst Kühnel and Dorothy G. Shepherd on the Buyid silks.<sup>22</sup> In an attempt to establish the authenticity of the silks, now called "Buyid," Kühnel noted that they had already been copied in medieval times; twentieth-century fakes would be revealed by manifest stylistic contradictions and iconographical mistakes,



which he did not see. Shepherd, Curator of Textiles at the Cleveland Museum of Art, turned from the visual aspects of the silks, which had engendered so much discussion, to their technical features, for "one can argue about matters of style," she wrote, "but one cannot argue about matters of technique."<sup>23</sup> She was able to establish a corpus of over one hundred examples, ranging in date from the pre-Buyid to possibly even Mongol times in Iran.<sup>24</sup>

In attempting to describe the technical characteristics of the silks, she noted that several of them were woven to shape, demonstrating an "almost unbelievable" display of virtuosity and an unusual freedom from the mechanical limitations of the loom. The complexity of the weaves and the virtuosity of the weavers were unparalleled anywhere and depended upon the introduction and use of the drawloom. The textiles were also characterized by weaving faults due to imperfections of the drawloom, broken threads incorrectly rethreaded, errors in selecting control cords, unevenness of yarn size, inconsistencies in dyes, and unevenness in spacing of warps. The Rayy silks were, she believed, unusually important for the history of textiles, for they demonstrate the transition from compound weaves (which have two sets of warps with different functions and one set of wefts) to lampas weaves (which have two sets of warps and wefts). The authenticity of the Rayy silks was demonstrated by the visible effects of age: dry and brittle, they have a somewhat fossilized appearance under the microscope. In comparison to reproductions of the Amazon and Dioscuri silks made in the late nineteenth century in Maastricht or of textiles in the Cathedral of Sens made ca. 1937, Shepherd maintained, "it is impossible for a weaver today to produce successfully a spurious medieval silk with all the refinements of technical detail and characteristics of age which clearly distinguish an ancient silk from a modern one."<sup>25</sup> She concluded that the silks represent one of "our greatest heritages of Persian art of the early Islamic period."

The controversy erupted again in 1973 with the publication of the Riggisberg Report, in which the Abegg Stiftung expressed doubts about many of the thirty-nine "Buyid" silks in their collection.<sup>26</sup> Mechthild Lemberg, curator of the collection, noted that although many of the silks look old, their fabric is actually well preserved. The normal signs of wear and age are absent, and holes and slashes seem quite arbitrary. The colors are dull rather than bright, and the fabrics, even

when pieced together, do not reveal the use to which they were put, for there are no signs of seams. Based on Gabriel Vial's technical analysis of the weaves and Judith Hofenck-de Graaff's dyestuff analysis, Lemberg concluded that thirty-one of the textiles revealed peculiarities: the absence of warp twist in the lampas fabrics, extensive use of lampas weaves, absence of classical flaws and presence of strange flaws in the weave, presence of aniline dye, and use of a sumac treatment after dyeing—all suggesting they were produced in the twentieth century on Jacquard looms and treated with sumac and tannin for purposes of deception. Only eight (nos. 51, 98, 451, 478, 655, 820, 1143, and 1521) were accepted as medieval fabrics.

Dorothy G. Shepherd, the most outspoken defender of the fabrics, was given the opportunity to write a brief note in the same issue of the *CIETA Bulletin*.<sup>27</sup> She cautioned the reader not to take the seemingly impressive document at face value, for there was a vast discrepancy between the data provided by the technical reports and Lemberg's sweeping and devastating conclusions. She noted the absence of any standard to which the technical analysis of the textiles could be compared, as well as the absence of any stylistic and epigraphic analysis. She challenged the validity of studying the holdings of only one museum and reaffirmed that the silks dated not from the Buyid period alone but from a period of some four hundred years. She announced her intention to publish a full-scale rebuttal of the Riggisberg Report.

An evaluation of the Riggisberg Report appeared in the next volume of the *CIETA Bulletin*,<sup>28</sup> which also published Shepherd's spirited defense of the silks in a 1974 double issue.<sup>29</sup> In a point-by-point refutation, Shepherd noted the similarity of Lemberg's criticisms to those of Day some twenty years earlier and faulted Lemberg for poor scholarship since she was apparently unaware of the history of the silks before Wiet's publication in 1947. Shepherd masterfully confirmed the discovery of the silks at Bibi Shahr Banu with newspaper accounts and letters. She first discussed the style of the silks, their purpose, condition, and color, refuting Lemberg's points. She then refuted the observations of Vial and Hofenck-de Graaf one by one. She concluded with the results of her own analyses, including carbon-14 dating, which could not provide medieval dates, although it suggested that the tested silks were not modern. The "Buyid" silks yielded

dates that were two to four hundred years too late, while an apparently sixteenth-century Safavid fabric gave an eighteenth-century date; only a fifteenth-century Italian sample and a modern fragment produced accurate dates. She believed that carbon-14 was problematic when applied to silk and announced that neutron activation analysis of the textiles was soon to be initiated. Microscopic analysis of stains on some silks showed them to be blood; embedded sand and rootlets growing through another fabric showed it to have been buried. She concluded that she did not claim to have proven the silks genuine, only that they had not yet been proven false.

In the same year Shepherd participated in a roundtable on archaeological textiles in which she concisely recapitulated the history of the so-called Buyid silks and the controversy surrounding them.<sup>30</sup> She distinguished the initial group of eight textiles excavated in Ray in 1925, a larger group that appeared in the 1930s, and a third group that had been in Cairo during the war. Other participants at the roundtable included Nobuko Kajitani, then Associate Conservator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, who examined thirty-eight "Buyid" silks in the Textile Museum and prepared microscopic photographs of fifteen of them for an exhibition.<sup>31</sup> On technical grounds Kajitani distinguished groups A and B, the first corresponding to the eight silks excavated at Ray in 1925, the second comprising the others. The groups exhibited differences in warp twist, weaving structure, fabric finish, color, flexibility, and condition. Although noting the importance of studying dyes, mordants, and pigments, she stated that previous dye and mordant analysis was neither systematic nor performed in cooperation with an analyst, curator, and technician. She refused to draw conclusions from her preliminary and unfortunately incomplete study, but her sober tone left the strong impression that the physical characteristics of many of the textiles were not consistent with an early medieval date.

By this point, presumably everyone who cared about the subject had taken a strong position, believing that the textiles were either genuine or fake. The editor of the *CIEITA Bulletin* wished to "draw a line on this controversy," and the standard handbooks on Islamic art avoided it altogether by illustrating only examples with impeccable pedigrees, such as the St. Josse Shroud.<sup>32</sup> In 1987, however, Donald King published another article on the subject after the Victoria and Albert Museum acquired several

pieces from the original find.<sup>33</sup> Using the documents first discovered by Shepherd as well as others in the museum's archives, King established the provenance of sixteen textiles through Read and Acheroff, who were involved with the excavations, and Nazare-Aga, who was well informed about them. He contrasted these textiles, which could be traced with reasonable certainty to the find site, to those that had appeared on the market in the 1930s and 1940s, many associated with Pope and Ackerman, which were of unsubstantiated provenance. Some may have come from other excavations elsewhere, but most of the others, he wrote, are probably fakes. According to King, these fakes drove the genuine textiles from the market, so that in 1979 the Victoria and Albert Museum acquired a portfolio of silk fragments that Read had been unable to sell from his nephew and heir. It was at this point that the authors began their investigation of the silks.

### *The Inscriptions on the Silks*

In February 1989 the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) requested a report on the inscriptions on the "Buyid" textiles. The inscriptions on 121 pieces (thirty-seven in the CMA and eighty-four in other collections) had been read for the museum by Harold Glidden, who had accomplished this Herculean task by piecing together texts from often-illegible fragments.<sup>34</sup> His individual readings were impeccable, but his death prevented him from completing an overview of the subject by putting the inscriptions into their historical and cultural contexts. Reviewing the inscriptions raised doubts about the group as a whole, for only a small group of textiles conformed to standard titlature and epigraphic forms,<sup>35</sup> whereas almost all the other pieces did not.

### COMPARATIVE MATERIAL

The study of the inscriptions on the "Buyid" silks is complicated by the lack of comparative material, for many objects attributed to the Buyids or their contemporaries have been considered fakes.<sup>36</sup> Metalwares are especially controversial: the recent catalogue of metalwares in the Freer Gallery of Art, for example, excludes a gold jug (43.1) with the name of the Buyid ruler Abū Maṣṣūr Bakhtiyār and a silver bowl (50.6) with an eagle and the name of the amir Abū Sahl b. Ṭahmān b. Farāmarz Farhādjirdī, although other studies have considered them genuine.<sup>37</sup> The



well-known salver in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts made for the Seljuq sultan Alp Arslān (r. 455–65/1063–72) is another controversial piece; it had already raised doubts in the 1930s when it was first published, and it has been omitted from three standard surveys of Iranian metalware.<sup>38</sup> A recently compiled list of the earliest silver objects from Iran contains only nine entries.<sup>39</sup>

Contemporary woodwork is less well known but almost as controversial. A bier in the Israel Museum, with eschatological texts about the deceased's testimony and faith in the Twelve Imams, was carbon-dated to 1010 ± 100 BP, which gave a calibrated date of A.D. 970,<sup>40</sup> and an unpublished grave-cover in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto (974.68.1) has similar invocations to the Twelve Imams in a foliated Kufic script.<sup>41</sup> Five wooden panels (Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art and elsewhere) inscribed with the name of the Buyid ruler 'Aḍud al-Dawla and the date 363/973–74 were probably made for a grille in the tomb of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib at Kufa, but they use a title that was not officially bestowed on 'Aḍud al-Dawla until four years later, and their authenticity has been questioned.<sup>42</sup> Other woodwork from the period is more openly suspect. Poor copies were made of the panels naming 'Aḍud al-Dawla,<sup>43</sup> and a pair of doors in the Freer Gallery of Art (35.1) inscribed with Koranic texts in a strange epigraphic style with punched stems and odd palmettes has breaks and repairs in suspicious places. Carbon-14 tests did not produce results consistent with a medieval date.<sup>44</sup>

Grave markers, which were very common in Egypt in the early Islamic period, were rarely used in Iran and do not provide much comparative material. The earliest tombstone from Iran, recently discovered in the Imamzada Ja'far at Damghan, can be dated ca. 287/900.<sup>45</sup> Four alabaster tombstones have been attributed to tenth-century Nishapur;<sup>46</sup> a few are known from the Caucasus;<sup>47</sup> and the largest group, some forty examples from the Buyid and Seljuq periods, come from the region around Yazd.<sup>48</sup> In addition to these stelae, a group of rectangular grave covers was excavated at Siraf on the Persian Gulf.<sup>49</sup> Group A, the largest and finest examples, includes eight examples dated between 364/975 and 46X/107X and twenty-one undated or fragmentary pieces. No pieces dated before 364/975 were found, despite Siraf's florescence for some 175 years before. The lack of earlier pieces was explained as an accident of survival, but it might also indicate a change in cultic practice.

The best series of inscriptions from medieval Iran with which to compare those on the "Buyid" silks are those on architecture.<sup>50</sup> They conform rigorously to set standards. During the 'Abbasid caliphate official actions were supervised by the central administration, and standards were set for official correspondence and inscriptions on objects and buildings. Just how closely life was regulated can be seen in the book by Hilāl al-Sābī' (d. 1056), *Rūsum dār al-khilāfa*, which sets out the rules and regulations of the 'Abbasid court in practice at the beginning of the caliphate of al-Qā'im bi-Amr Allāh (r. 422–67/1031–75).<sup>51</sup> The work includes many references to the Buyid 'Aḍud al-Dawla, who clearly adhered to these regulations in the titles he used in official correspondence and inscriptions.<sup>52</sup>

#### COMPARISON OF TITULATURE

The most important epigraphic feature that can be tested by comparing the "Buyid" textiles to architectural inscriptions is titulature. The comparison is justified because monumental inscriptions follow protocol closely, and so do the few textile inscriptions naming Buyid amirs. The best example is the tunic (Washington, D.C., Textile Museum 3.116) made from a textile naming Bahā' al-Dawla, a piece whose authenticity has never been questioned.<sup>53</sup> In the inscription<sup>54</sup> he is given his full name, including title (*shāhanshāh*, king of kings), *laqab* or honorific (*bahā' al-dawla wa ḍiyyā' al-milla wa ghiyāth al-umma*, Beauty of the State, Light of the Community, and Aider of the Nation), *kunyā* (Abū Naṣr), *nasab* or genealogy (*ibn 'aḍud al-dawla wa tāj al-milla*, son of the Forearm of the State and Crown of the Community), and a well-known benediction (*aṭāla allāh baqāh*, may God extend his life). The inscription invokes glory and prosperity to him (*'izz wa iqbāl*). This was obviously a presentation piece as it was made for the use (*li-isti'māl*) of Abū Sa'īd Zādān farrūkh b. Azādmard, the treasurer. He too is a known personality, for Hilāl al-Sābī' mentions him under the year 391/1001 as Bahā' al-Dawla's messenger to Ḥajjāj.<sup>55</sup>

Three other pieces with an established provenance name Buyid amirs. A piece that belonged to Read (Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks, 30.2)<sup>56</sup> was one of two fragments of a linen textile with a red inscription invoking good wishes on Fakhr al-Dawla, who is identified by name and title: ". . . and grandeur to the amir, the most exalted lord, Friend of Graces, king of kings Fakhr al-Dawla" (. . . *wa rifā' li-l-amūr al-sayyid al-*

*ajall walī al-niʿam shāhanshāh* and *shāhanshāh fakhral-dawla*).<sup>57</sup> A silk fragment in Berlin (Museum für Islamische Kunst I-3218), published in 1927 by Kühnel, offers glory and prosperity to the king of kings (*ʿizz wa iqbāl li-malik al-mulūk*).<sup>58</sup> This title was first used epigraphically by Bahāʾ al-Dawla in a commemorative inscription engraved at Persepolis in 392/1001–2; it became a hallmark of the Buyid dynasty.<sup>59</sup> A third piece in Chicago (Art Institute 26.2007), published in 1930 and associated with Rayy, mentions the last supreme Buyid ruler, al-Malik al-Rahīm (r. 440–47/1048–55) as “the august *shāhanshāh*, king of kings, al-Rahīm Abū Naṣr, son of the Vivifier of Religion . . . associate of the Commander of the Faithful, may God extend his dominion and his sultanate and glorify his victories.”<sup>60</sup> In addition to these three pieces, which have been known since 1930, another textile with no known provenance bears the date 421/1030 and the name of Jalāl al-Dawla, the Buyid ruler in Baghdad (r. 416–35/1025–44), who is called “our lord the king of kings” (*mawlānā shāhanshāh*).<sup>61</sup>

Only one other extant textile names a historical figure known from medieval Iran: the shroud of St. Josse (Paris, Louvre 7.502), another securely documented piece. It invokes glory and prosperity on the military commander Abū Maṣṣūr Bakhtikīn, “may his life be extended.” According to Ibn al-Athīr, Bakhtikīn was a general and amir in service to the Samanid ruler ʿAbd al-Malik b. Nūḥ and was executed by his overlord in 349/961.<sup>62</sup> Another piece whose authenticity is generally accepted is a silk with interlaced bands framing falconers wearing turbans and flanking a tree.<sup>63</sup> It is inscribed beside the riders *al-īṣfahbadh al-jalīl ayyadahu allāh* (the exalted *īṣfahbadh*, may God aid him). *īṣfahbadh* (or more usually *īṣpahbadh*) is a Persian word for army chief; this well-attested military title was used in pre-Islamic Iran and survived in the Caspian provinces down to the Mongol invasions.<sup>64</sup> It was already used on the Kaʿba in 200/815–16 for the throne of captured *īṣpahbadh* Kabūlshāh and occurs on the tomb built for the Bawandid amir Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Wandarīn between 407 and 411 (1016–21) at Radkan West in Iran.<sup>65</sup> Although the particular individual mentioned on the textile cannot be identified, the title shows that he was a local ruler in the Caspian provinces of Iran during the tenth or eleventh century. In addition to these two pieces made for Iranian dignitaries, a contemporary piece made for an identifiable historical figure is the silk known since the mid-

nineteenth century (London, Victoria and Albert Museum 8560-1863) and woven for the Marwanid ruler of Diyarbekir, Naṣr al-Dawla Abū Naṣr (r. 401–53/1010–61), who is designated by his title “most exalted lord” (*al-sayyid al-ajall*), his *laqab* Naṣr al-Dawla, his *kunyā* Abū Naṣr, and a benediction “may God extend his life.”<sup>66</sup>

In contrast to these identifiable figures named on pieces with established provenances, none of the other people named on the “Buyid” silks can be identified. It is possible that these people were not as important as their reigning Buyid overlords and hence escaped mention in contemporary chronicles. The amir Abūʿl-ʿAbbās Valkīn b. Hārūn, for whom the set of silver dishes in Tehran was made, is similarly unknown in the chronicles.<sup>67</sup> So it is essential to examine their titulature further to see how important the people mentioned on the textiles were and how their titles compare to official protocol.

The most common rank on the “Buyid” silks is amir. It occurs on nine pieces: two people are simply “the amir,”<sup>68</sup> while seven are “the most exalted amir” (*al-amīr al-ajall*).<sup>69</sup> The elative or comparative form *ajall* (most exalted) clearly designates a person of high rank, as is shown by the inscription on a minaret erected ca. 418/1027 in Damghan near the mosque known as the Tarik Khana, where the local governor is “exalted” (*al-ḥajīb al-jalīl*) while the Ziyarid sovereign is “most exalted” (*al-amīr al-sayyid al-ajall*).<sup>70</sup> These “most exalted” amirs mentioned on the “Buyid” silks, then, would have to have been important individuals, so that their omission in contemporary chronicles is noteworthy. In comparison, the “most exalted amir” Badr b. Ḥasanwayh, who left several monumental inscriptions from the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh century, is a well-known individual whose dynasty rates an entry in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.<sup>71</sup> These unidentified amirs on the textiles do, however, resemble the unidentified but “most exalted amir,” commander (*īṣfahsalār*), and chief (*raʾīs*) Abū Sahl Farhadjardī, for whom the questionable silver bowl in the Freer Gallery was made.

Four of the “Buyid” silks mention people with the *nisba* al-Ḥārithī: the inscription on the large double-faced silk in the Textile Museum says that it was made by ʿAbd al-Ghāfir b. Ḥamdawayh al-Muṭṭawwī in 384/994 for “the most exalted amir, our lord” (*al-amīr al-ajall sayyidnā*) Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Walīd b. Muḥammad al-Aslamī al-Ḥārithī al-Ṭūsī.<sup>72</sup> He was very much alive when the silk was woven, for the benediction



asks God to extend his life. Hence, the piece was probably not woven as a tomb cover, although it could have been used as such after his death and thereby preserved. The inscription on another piece with confronted peacocks on the backs of bulls states that it was made in 393/1002–3 for “the lord, the ascetic, the chief” (*al-sayyid al-zāhid al-raʿīs*) Saʿīd b. Abī Khaythama al-Ḥārithī.<sup>73</sup> He too was alive at the date when it was woven, for the same benediction is used. The inscription on a third piece with lobed cartouches enclosing confronted griffins states that it was made for the use (*istiʿmāl*) of the amir, Ghiyāth al-ʿUmma, ʿIyāʾ al-Milla Muḥammad b. Saʿīd b. ʿAlī al-Ḥārithī, who was also alive.<sup>74</sup> Finally, the inscription on a double cloth inscribed with a single large band on each face states that it was made by ʿAlī b. Yūsuf b. Marzubān for the use (*li-yastaʿmilh*) of the most exalted amir Qawām al-Mulk Abū ʿAbdallāh ʿĪsā b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥārithī, who was alive and in high office.<sup>75</sup>

If it is assumed that these four people with the *nisba* al-Ḥārithī are all related, then this is a prominent family. ʿAbd al-Walīd in 384/994 was “the most exalted amir” and “our lord”; in 393/1002–3 Saʿīd was “the lord, the ascetic, and the chief”; Muḥammad b. Saʿīd gets the same honorifics, “Aider of the Nation and Light of the Community,” that the reigning Buyid Bahāʾ al-Dawla had on the silk made into a tunic;<sup>76</sup> and ʿĪsā b. Ibrāhīm is another most exalted amir whose titles and benediction suggest that he might have worked in the Seljuq vizierate. Yet these figures are unknown in texts. According to contemporary titulature these people should have been as important as the Buyids, Ziyarids, Hasanwayhids, and other known dynasties, yet nothing else is known about them.

The titulature on another textile, an apparently complete loom piece with addorsed peacocks between two border bands, is very peculiar.<sup>77</sup> The inscriptions repeatedly invoke “glory to our master, the sultan and caliph of the Merciful One, Bāqir b. Shahrazād al-Hamadānī, may God prolong his shadow.” Bāqir’s titles are most impressive, and the benediction is one used for rulers, as it relates to the old Persian concept of the ruler as God’s shadow on earth; yet his name suggests he is a new convert (his father has a Persian rather than a Muslim name), and he is unknown from texts. Glidden has already pointed out how odd one of his titles is: “caliph of the Merciful One” is not recorded in this early period but was used in sixteenth-century Central Asia for the Shaybanid

rulers of Bukhara. The title *sultān* is also unprecedented in this early period. The word originally had the abstract sense of “power” or “authority,” and ʿAḍud al-Dawla’s grandson Abū Shujāʿ had been granted the title *sultān al-dawla wa ʿizz al-milla* (Sultan of the State and Glory of the Community) when he succeeded his father Bahāʾ al-Dawla as chief Buyid amir in 403/1012. Like the other titles used by the Buyids, it passed to the Seljuqs, but it was only officially adopted by the Seljuqs and Ghaznavids on coins in the mid-eleventh century, and the form *al-sultān al-muʿazzam* was applied to the chief Seljuq or Ghaznavid ruler.<sup>78</sup> The way the text is laid out in the bands along the selvages is also odd. On one piece the middle syllable of *khatīfa* is written upside down and backwards, and on another the text has been arbitrarily cut into sections without regard to sense. It is as though the inscription had been written out on sheets of paper to be handed to the weaver, but the order and position of the pieces of paper were jumbled.

The coincidence of similar names is another peculiarity on several other “Buyid” silks. Three pieces have the same or almost the same name: a large piece in the Textile Museum was “made for the use” (*sunīʿa li-yastaʿmilh*) of the amir and exalted lord, ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Shahrazād b. Rāstawayh al-Fārisī al-İshbahānī, when he was alive, for he gets a benediction for living people: “may God prolong his existence.”<sup>79</sup> The well-known pall in Cleveland that was woven to shape was apparently made for him after his death.<sup>80</sup> In the inscription on the pall he is called only “the disobedient servant” (*al-ʿabd al-ʿāṣī*), but this humility is typical of pious inscriptions, and the two pieces could be explained as coming from the same tomb. Another pall, also woven to shape, has the same name, father’s name, and grandfather’s name but a different great-grandfather (Rustam instead of Rāstawayh).<sup>81</sup> Abū Saʿīd Yaḥyā b. Ziyād is another name that appears on two textiles with similar patterns. Both have repeating patterns of triangles inscribed in roundels connected by smaller circles with inscriptions, but one textile<sup>82</sup> has confronted peacocks and the other<sup>83</sup> has two pairs of confronted birds.

Another group that stands out for its peculiarities of epigraphy and paleography consists of three textiles in Cleveland with inscriptions stating that they were made in 203/818–19: one with an archer attacking gazelles was made in Basra for Abū Naṣr Iyās al-Fazārī; a second with octagons enclosing a lion attacking a gazelle was made in

Baghdad for the most exalted amir Abū'l-Ra'īs Khalaf b. Maṣṣūr al-Ṭawāghī; and a third with kneeling hunters attacking a camel was made by Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan al-Nāṣir.<sup>84</sup> Few pieces survive from this early date, and the coincidence of three pieces dated in the same year is striking. The texts also stand out by the quantity of information (patrons, weavers, dates, place of manufacture). In addition, each text has features that are not consistent with such a date. The first uses a text (blessings from God) reserved for the caliph on *tirāz* at this early date, yet the person for whom it was made is unknown. The script, which is similar to the one used on the third, is very attenuated, and the letter *kāf* has swan's neck curves, a feature that appears elsewhere at least a century later. The second piece was made for a "most exalted" amir, a form not attested in monumental inscriptions until the late tenth century;<sup>85</sup> he too is an unknown figure, but he gets a benediction, "may God extend his existence," which is reserved for the caliph at this early date. Baghdad is not usually called Baghdad at this time but Madīnat al-Salām, as in a *tirāz* dated 305/917–18.<sup>86</sup> The third piece combines the name of the artisan with the date, an odd combination not found on other textiles, and the style of the script, with wedge-shaped terminals, is also not consonant with the date.

In sum, then, the group of seven well-attested pieces (eight, including the one made for the Marwanid ruler of Diyarbekir) all name known individuals whose titles conform to those in architectural inscriptions. By contrast, none of the individuals named on other pieces, who also carry lofty titles, can be identified—a fact that raises doubts about certain groups, such as the four with the *nisba* al-Ḥārithī. It is not a question of identifying any old Tom, Dick, or Harry, for the titles that these people carry on the textiles show them to have been important individuals. The seven amirs who carry the title "most exalted," for example, are of the same rank as the contemporary governor of Damghan, and the fact that not a single one of them can be identified in historical sources is disturbing.

#### OTHER TYPES OF TEXTS

Titles and names are obviously of no help with regard to the anonymous pieces, but a similar distinction can be made between the traditional types of texts used on well-attested pieces (and on contemporary objects) and the unusual types of texts on the other "Buyid" silks. King's group of

textiles, which could all be traced to the finds at Rayy, included one piece with a pseudo-inscription<sup>87</sup> and another five pieces with inscriptions that did not give specific names or titles. A large weft-faced compound twill silk, once belonging to Nazare-Aga, has a band of confronted birds and is inscribed "glory."<sup>88</sup> The "Ganymede" silk, with a crowned figure carried by a double-headed eagle, has a band inscribed with the repeated phrase *al-baraka kāfiya wa 'abdahu ṭāhir* (as long as His servant is pure, he possesses sufficient blessing); the words below the eagle complete the phrase *wa ni'ma tamma* (and complete ease). There are also several illegible words next to the eagle's beak.<sup>89</sup> The "Harpy" silk, a double cloth with harpies inscribed in octagons, has a repeated text in the octagonal cartouches: *'izz wa iqbāl wa ni'ma wa sa'āda wa salāma bāqiya wa surūr dārīma* [*sic*] *li-ṣāhibih ṭāla 'umruhu* (Glory, good fortune, ease, felicity, lasting well-being, and enduring happiness to its owner, may his life be long).<sup>90</sup> A silk with stripes containing plant scrolls is inscribed with the repeated phrase *naṣr wa tawfiq* (victory and success).<sup>91</sup> Finally, a double cloth with confronted griffins and birds inscribed in circles has smaller circles with the repeated phrase *'izz wa iqbāl li-ṣāhib al-ra'īs ṭāla [umrahu]* (Glory and good fortune to its owner, the chief, may his life be long).<sup>92</sup> All the texts are generalized formulas of good wishes to the owner and are similar to the texts found on such other pieces as the silver bowls in the Hermitage.<sup>93</sup>

In contrast, the inscriptions on many other "Buyid" silks have different kinds of texts, mainly poems from a range of sources lamenting death and asking God's forgiveness.<sup>94</sup> The most popular are verses attributed to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib invoking God's forgiveness. Several come from his collected poems,<sup>95</sup> and others are taken from the poems of Abū'l-ʿAtāhiya (748–825), a popular Arabic poet who repented of his life at the ʿAbbasid court and devoted himself to ascetic verse depicting the horrors of all-leveling death.<sup>96</sup> Three textiles repeat a verse about being carried off on a bier by Ka'b b. Zuhayr, an Arab poet who was a contemporary of the Prophet.<sup>97</sup> Another textile has a maxim about planting the tree of clemency from the *Kitāb al-dunyā wa'l-dīn* by the Shāfiʿite jurisconsult al-Māwardī (364/974–450/1058).<sup>98</sup>

Some of the other choices are more unusual and have specific historical referents. An almost complete silk cloth with two-headed eagles carrying human figures has a verse by the Arabic poet al-Buḥturī congratulating the ʿAbbasid caliph al-



Mutawakkil (r. 847–61) on being saved from drowning: “You remain the Commander of the Faithful and your preservation is a handsome and good [thing] for the era.”<sup>99</sup> Another large lampas-woven piece with a root growing through it and ovals with running animals (mountain goats?) has a panegyric composed for the Ikhshidid ruler Kāfūr by the poet al-Mutanabbī when he was in Egypt between 346/957 and 351/962: “Lo the lion in whose body dwells a leonine spirit; / But how many lions have the spirit of dogs?”<sup>100</sup> A large rectangular cloth in Washington has a long inscription band with thirteen imperatives, a literary conceit in the same tradition as the one with fourteen imperatives that al-Mutanabbī composed when he was at the court of the Hamdanid ruler of Aleppo, Sayf al-Dawla, from 337/948 to 347/957.<sup>101</sup> On that occasion the poet presented the ruler with an ode including two lines of verse made up of fourteen consecutive verbs in the imperative form in which the poet requested money, favors, and the like; the ruler was so impressed with this virtuosity that he granted all the requests.<sup>102</sup> On the textile, the imperatives are directed toward God, who is implored to grant security and blessing.

Such poetic phrases are not common on any type of Iranian object before the late twelfth century. Maxims, such as “Planning before work protects you from regret; patience is the key to comfort” or “Knowledge is an ornament for youth and intelligence is a crown of gold,” are commonly inscribed in plaited Kufic on “Samanid” ceramics, slipwares associated with the eastern Islamic world in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries.<sup>103</sup> Iranian metalwares produced up to the twelfth century are typically inscribed with prayers invoking God’s blessing on the owner (*du‘ā*).<sup>104</sup> The one exception is a gold jug (CMA 66.22) made between 373/983 and 375/985 and inscribed with the name of ‘Aḡd al-Dawla’s son, Šamšām al-Dawla. The poem it carries was composed by Abū Ishāq Ibrahīm al-Šabī for the ruler and recorded in al-Tha‘ālibī’s *Yafīmat al-dahr*.<sup>105</sup> The gold jug, like most of the gold objects made for the Buyids, is not universally accepted as authentic; its titulature is odd in that the Buyid is called the just king (*al-malik al-‘adl* [*sic*]), a title associated with eastern Iranian rulers such as the Khwarazmshah Abū’l-‘Abbās Mā’mūn, who built a minaret at Gurganj in 401/1010–11, and the benediction asks God to perpetuate his sultanate.<sup>106</sup> Verses only appear on other pieces of

metalware in the late twelfth century and are often written as though the object itself were speaking (“I am a vase fit for . . .”).<sup>107</sup> This type of text also appears on a resist-dyed silk attributed to the late twelfth century in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (15.815).<sup>108</sup> Pedestrian love poetry, written by contemporary minor poets or even by the potters themselves, is found on Kashan-style lustrewares developed in the late decades of the twelfth century.<sup>109</sup>

Inscriptions invoking the Twelve Imams are also unusual at this early period. They do occur on several pieces of woodwork (see above), but the earliest surviving lustre tiles naming the Twelve Imams are those made for the tomb of Fāṭima at Qum in 602/1206;<sup>110</sup> their names only become common on metalwork in the Safavid period.<sup>111</sup> The earliest tombstones and crested grave covers from Iran use only Koranic texts and standard formulas, such as “this is the grave of.” Tombstones with the names of the Twelve Imams become common only in the mid-twelfth century.<sup>112</sup>

A study of the inscriptions on the “Buyid” silks thus raised grave doubts about the date of many of the pieces. The small group with an established provenance either names identifiable historical figures or invokes God’s blessing and good favor on the owner—the type of inscription typical of contemporary objects. In contrast, many of the other pieces that appeared on the market later name people who carry important titles but cannot be identified in texts or have poetic texts—a type of inscription not found on contemporary objects.

### *Carbon-14 Analysis of Persian Silks*

The method of dating organic substances by analyzing the relative presence of carbon isotopes was developed in the late 1940s and almost immediately used to verify the age of works of art.<sup>113</sup> Carbon nuclei have six protons and usually six neutrons, resulting in a mass of twelve atomic mass units (amu). Some one percent of carbon atoms contain an extra neutron, with a resultant mass of thirteen amu, and about one nucleus in a trillion contains two extra neutrons, with a resultant mass of fourteen amu. This “carbon-14” is radioactive, with a characteristic “half-life” of 5,568 years. In other words, organic material from 5,600 years ago will have only half as much carbon-14 as modern material. Because of the

TABLE 1. Carbon-14 Tests of Silk Fabrics by Liquid Scintillation Counting in 1973<sup>1</sup>

<i>Catalogue No.</i>	<i>Accession No.</i>	<i>Radiocarbon Date (BP)</i>	<i>Calibrated Ages 1<math>\sigma</math><sup>2</sup></i>	<i>Calibrated Ages 2<math>\sigma</math><sup>3</sup></i>
(fig. 16) I	CMA TR15370/8	355 $\pm$ 85	1439–1645	1410–1955
(fig. 1) II	CMA 68.225	335 $\pm$ 85	1443–1650	1420–1955
(fig. 2) III	CMA 68.230	380 $\pm$ 100	1430–1640	1329–1955
(fig. 3) IV	CMA 68.247	<205	1660–1955	1528–1955
V	CMA 85.59	330 $\pm$ 105	1440–1640	1410–1955
VI	RN6948 <sup>4</sup>	625 $\pm$ 145	1260–1430	1150–1530
VII	Guicherd copy	<180	1671–1955	1650–1955
VIII	16 c. Iranian	160 $\pm$ 105	1650–1950	1490–1955
IX	15 c. Italian	480 $\pm$ 85	1332–1454	1280–1636

1. Based on information supplied in Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks," 210–11, Appendix E-1. The calibration ages were calculated by Dr. A. J. T. Jull of the University of Arizona.

2. Calendar dates (A.D.) obtained from dendochronological calibration using 1 $\sigma$  (68% confidence limit).

3. Calendar dates (A.D.) obtained from dendochronological

calibration using 2 $\sigma$  (95% confidence limit).

4. Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks," 210, reported that this piece was at the University of Pennsylvania, but it is now housed in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, RN-6948. The Museum's files show that this was the piece tested in 1962 by Texas Bionuclear. They reported a calculated age of 985  $\pm$  50.

large changes in the radioactive carbon content of the atmosphere after the development of the atom bomb, "modern" is conventionally defined as A.D. 1950. Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), the most common source of carbon in the atmosphere, is absorbed during photosynthesis by plants, which in turn are eaten by animals. Both plants and animals cease to absorb carbon after death, so the amount of carbon-14 in their remains will decay by half every 5,568 years.

Until the 1980s all radiocarbon measurements were made by using a counter to observe the decay of radioactive carbon atoms. Liquid-scintillation counters measure the light emitted when a beta-particle from a decaying carbon-14 molecule strikes a complex organic molecule or "scintillant." Since only 13.5 decays per minute occur in one gram of modern carbon, liquid-scintillation counting requires fairly large samples (ca. 1 g). This method was used in 1973 to date Persian silks. The results were disappointing because they neither confirmed the tenth- or eleventh-century dates expected nor unequivocally indicated later dates.<sup>114</sup> Nine textile specimens were analyzed: five (I–V) were believed to be medieval Persian silks, one (VI) had been excavated by Erich Schmidt at Ray, and three were controls: a twentieth-century copy by F. Guicherd of the medieval silk Sens 28 (VII), a sixteenth-century Persian silk (VIII), and a fifteenth-century Italian silk (IX).<sup>115</sup> The samples were sent for testing to Teledyne Isotopes in Westwood, New Jersey. Eight of the samples were treated with a hot sulphuric acid-sodium dichromate (H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>-Na<sub>2</sub>CR<sub>2</sub>O<sub>7</sub>) solution to remove dye before analysis; sample VIII was

treated with Rongalit, but it did not remove the dye as completely. Although reasonably consistent results were obtained for the three controls, all but one of the supposedly medieval Persian silks produced results indicating dates from the early fifteenth to the mid-seventeenth century at the 68 percent confidence level (one standard deviation) and from the mid-fourteenth to the twentieth century at the 95 percent confidence level (two standard deviations).<sup>116</sup> The one exception, the silk that Schmidt had excavated at Ray (VI), produced results consistent with a date of 1260–1430 (one standard deviation) and 1150–1530 (two standard deviations) (table 1). Shepherd noted that tests by Texas Bionuclear in 1962 on another fragment of the same textile in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, had produced results consistent with a date ca. A.D. 1000.<sup>117</sup> In reporting her findings, Shepherd noted that the carbon-14 analysts suggested redating the textiles on the basis of the carbon-14 results, but she dismissed the suggestion and concluded that there were definite problems connected with carbon-14 testing as applied to silk.<sup>118</sup> No further tests of medieval Persian silks were conducted, primarily because of the expense and the size of the sample (ca. 0.5–2.0 g) required with the available technology.

Recently, carbon-14 has begun to be measured with an accelerator mass spectrometer (AMS). This device was developed in the late 1970s when a mass spectrometer, used since the 1930s to separate atoms by mass, was coupled with a particle accelerator, used in nuclear physics. This new instrument has the sensitivity to measure such



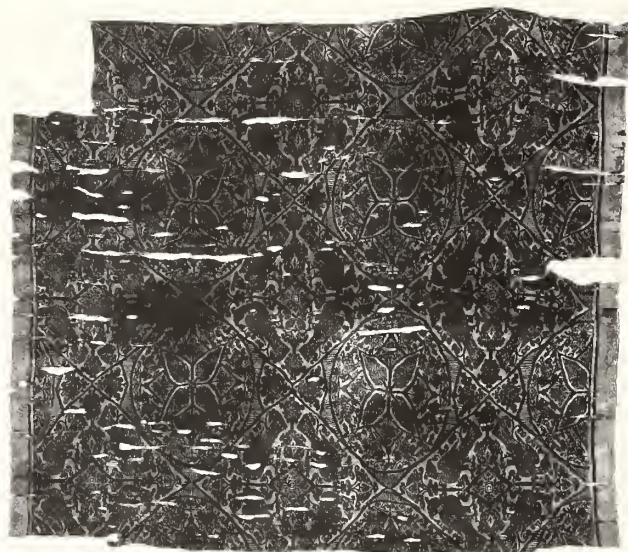


FIG. 1. Textile II. Silk textile (in two pieces), compound twill weave. Warp: 23.5 cm; weft: 78 cm. Warp: 70 cm; weft: 77.5 cm. Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund, CMA 68.225.

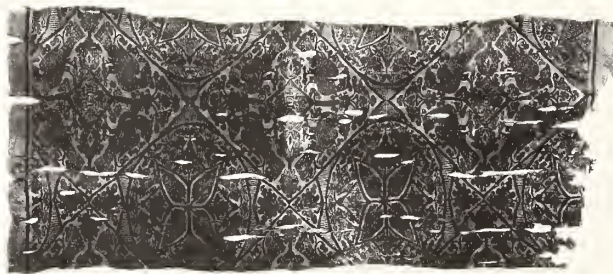


FIG. 2. Textile III. Silk tunic fragment, lampas weave. Bottom edge front to bottom edge back: 127 cm; sleeve edge to sleeve edge: 149.8 cm; selvage to selvage: 59–61 cm. Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund, CMA 68.230.



FIG. 3. Textile IV. Silk border, lampas weave. Warp: 8.9 cm; weft: 34.3 cm. Deaccessioned and destroyed, 1973. Formerly CMA 68.247.



rare atoms as carbon-14 at natural levels and makes it possible to measure radiocarbon in samples containing much less than a milligram of carbon, less than one-thousandth the material needed by the older counter methods. The technique is also more than a thousand times more sensitive than decay counting since the amounts of carbon-14 are measured directly rather than by waiting for the decay to occur. The advantages of this technique for testing works of art, where the destruction of the smallest possible sample is desirable, were immediately apparent, and the technique was quickly applied to test the Shroud of Turin, claimed to be Christ's burial sheet. Small samples (less than 50 mg) of the Shroud and control samples were submitted to three independent laboratories in Tucson, Oxford, and Zurich. The results of radiocarbon measurements at the different laboratories yielded a calibrated calendar age range with 95 percent confidence of A.D. 1260–1390, the time when the existence of the Shroud is first documented, and provided conclusive evidence that the linen in the Shroud is medieval.<sup>119</sup>

The success of the tests on the Shroud suggested that the controversial Persian silks might also be dated by AMS. For the present study, samples from sixteen textiles in the Cleveland Museum of Art and one in the Textile Museum were chosen. The pieces sampled represent a range of technique, style, and provenance. Three (1, 3, and 4) have a provenance traceable with some certainty to the find near Rayy in the 1920s, while the fourteen others appeared on the market later. Of these fourteen, two textiles were chosen for testing because, when examined in 1973, they had been found to contain rootlets (10) or blood (9), substances that in Shepherd's opinion indicated that the textiles had been associated with burials.<sup>120</sup> Sample 12 was chosen for testing not only because it provided an important opportunity to compare results obtained by AMS with those obtained from liquid scintillation counting (I on table 1) but also because in 1973 it had been declared the product of a Jacquard loom.<sup>121</sup>

Inscriptions were another important factor in the choice of textiles to be tested. All have legible inscriptions except for 1, which is uninscribed, and 4, which has a pseudo-inscription. Eight display a variety of historical texts. One piece (3) invokes good wishes on an anonymous owner. No pieces available for testing name known historical figures, but seven (2, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, and 17) name specific individuals; of these one person

(2) is identified as a *shaykh* and a *sayyid*, and three (12, 14, and 17) carry the title "most exalted amir." Three pieces were selected because they share the same information found on other textiles: 11 is one of three pieces with the name 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Shahrazād, 13 is one of two pieces made for Abū Sa'īd Yalyā b. Ziyād, and 17 is one of the three pieces with an inscription stating that it was made in 203/818–19. Sample 16, an intact caftan, gives the name of the owner and the artisan who made it.

The inscribed textiles selected also display a variety of nonhistorical texts: one (7) has a verse from the poems of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, another (9) carries the verse by Ka'b b. Zuhayr about being carried off on a bier; and a third (10) is inscribed with the panegyric that al-Mutannabī composed for the Ikhshidid Kāfūr. This textile, moreover, was the one with rootlets grown within its weave. Two textiles of similar pattern but different color (5 and 6) are inscribed with the maxim: "Everything that the Merciful One has revealed is to be relied upon." Another piece (15) has two inscriptions, one about beauty and whiteness and one about people of knowledge. A final piece (8) is inscribed with a pious phrase of unidentified source.

For the carbon-14 testing, small samples (ca. 40–60 mg) were taken from representative areas of the textiles that were as free as possible from such visible contaminants as hairs, soot, blood, and plants. The samples were sent to laboratories at Oxford, Zurich, and Tucson, the three used for testing the Shroud of Turin. There they were pretreated with acids, bases, and organic solvents to remove extraneous material that might affect the radiocarbon measurement.

Several of the pieces presented special problems since they dissolved in the basic solution (NaOH), a cleaning agent that is a part of the standard pretreatment. Once dissolved, the sample had to be filtered. The first test of 3 by AMS produced results indicating an unexpectedly early date. This may have been caused by residual contamination from Triton X-100, the petroleum-based detergent that had been used in the pretreatment of the sample. In the retests, the laboratory took special care to see that the samples were thoroughly cleaned without using Triton X-100.<sup>122</sup> Sample 2 also produced an unexpectedly early date, perhaps due to weak pretreatment, and a stronger pretreatment was used in the retest.

Results of AMS testing are summarized in table



2. The first column gives the catalogue number, listing the pieces in chronological order by the results obtained. The second column gives the museum accession number, either Cleveland (CMA) or Textile Museum (TM). The third column gives radiocarbon dates BP (before the present [A.D. 1950]) based on conventionalized standards. Because changes in cosmic-ray flux as well as climatic and man-made effects cause carbon-14 to fluctuate in the atmosphere with time, it is necessary to calibrate the conventional radiocarbon age against samples of known age. Tree rings can be dated accurately and are used for this calibration. A curve of carbon-14 against known-age tree rings has been established from the present to ca. 7200 B.C. The values in the last two columns are obtained from the calibration curves for the 68 percent confidence limit (one standard deviation) and the 95 percent confidence limit (two standard deviations). In other words, it is fairly likely (68 percent probable) that the date of an individual specimen falls within the range given in the fourth column and nearly certain (95 percent probable) that it falls within the wider range given in the fifth column.

The results in table 2 fall into four chronological groups: A (medieval), B (late fifteenth–mid-seventeenth century), C (after ca. 1650) and D (post-1950).

#### GROUP A

Four pieces (1–4) fall into the medieval group. Three have a provenance traceable with some certainty to the find near Ray in the 1920s: 1, a compound tabby with confronted lions but no inscription, belonged to Acheroff; 3, the well-known "Harpy" silk, was in the hands of Rowland Read; and 4, a tabby with supplementary pattern wefts and decorated with pseudo-inscriptions in ogival medallions, was once owned by the dealer Nazare-Aga. The other piece in the medieval group (2) was acquired by the Cleveland Museum in 1968 and has no known links to the finds at Ray. To confirm the early dates suggested by the test results, samples of three of the four pieces (2, 3, and 4) were retested. In the case of 4, the retest confirmed the original result, and a weighted average of the two results is given. In the case of 3, as has already been mentioned, the date suggested by the original test was very different from the two consistent results found in the retests. The laboratory concluded that the results obtained in the first test were invalid due to residual contamination, and these results were therefore

omitted from the weighted average of the retest results. In the case of 2, the date suggested in the first test may have been too early due to contamination from the weak pretreatment used, and the results should be discounted.

#### GROUP B

Two textiles (5 and 6) of similar pattern but different color produced results suggesting dates between those given by group A and modern times. One of these samples (5) was first tested at Oxford; two retests were conducted at Tucson using different pretreatments. The retests produced consistent but slightly later dates. The error in the original test of 5 at Oxford ( $425 \pm 85$ ) is less than two standard deviations from the weighted average of the two retests at Tucson ( $312 \pm 33$ ), so it cannot be rejected on statistical grounds. In tests of other samples, however, the Oxford laboratory has often produced results slightly older than those produced by other laboratories, and the Oxford results are not included in the weighted average of the retests on 5 by the Tucson lab. That result is strikingly similar to the result obtained for 6 and suggests a date for this group from the early sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century (68 percent confidence level) or the late fifteenth to the mid-seventeenth century (95 percent confidence level).

#### GROUP C

Tests on nine specimens (7–14) yielded dates between the mid-seventeenth century and the present at the 68 percent confidence limit and between the early sixteenth century and the present at the 95 percent confidence limit. Due to the rapid fluctuations of atmospheric carbon-14 in this period, it is impossible to obtain precise calibrated ages for any specific value of carbon-14. As many as six dates are possible for a single value. In general, the entire period is given as the calibrated age and sometimes referred to as the "Stradivarius gap" to show the limitations of radiocarbon dating for determining the ages of objects made during this period.<sup>123</sup>

#### GROUP D

Two specimens (16 and 17) can be dated after 1950 because the tests revealed the presence of isotopes that were only introduced into the atmosphere after atomic bombs were detonated.

Four of the textiles tested previously by liquid-scintillation counting (I, II, III, and V) formed a coherent group whose calibrated ages at one

TABLE 2. Carbon-14 Tests of Silk Fabrics by Accelerator Mass Spectrometry in 1988-91

<i>Catalogue No.</i>		<i>Accession No.</i>	<i>Radiocarbon Date (BP)</i>	<i>Calibrated Ages 1σ<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Calibrated Ages 2σ<sup>2</sup></i>
GROUP A	1	CMA 75.45	1000 ± 55	985–1149	899–1160
	2	CMA 68.246	1209 ± 59 <sup>3</sup>	692–890	670–980
			R) <sup>4</sup> 911 ± 45	1029–1190	1002–1221
	3	TM 73.663	1233 ± 56	686–718	660–943
R1) 963 ± 78 R2) 884 ± 48 Av) <sup>5</sup> 906 ± 41 <sup>6</sup>			1037–1188	1023–1214	
4	CMA 39.506	886 ± 52	1036–1216	1004–1260	
		R) 922 ± 48			
		Av) 905 ± 35	1038–1187	1027–1210	
GROUP B	5	CMA 50.84	425 ± 85 <sup>7</sup> R1) 329 ± 49 R2) 299 ± 44 <sup>8</sup> Av) 312 ± 33 <sup>9</sup>	1410–1630	1310–1650
				1518–1640	1480–1649
	6	CMA 68.221	285 ± 50	1514–1657	1459–1669
GROUP C	7	CMA 88.98	240 ± 50	1639–1955	1516–1955
	8	CMA 82.281	225 ± 50 <sup>10</sup>	—	1521–1955
	9	CMA 66.134	201 ± 66	1645–1954	1517–1950
			R) 236 ± 47		
			Av) 224 ± 38	1645–1955	1526–1955
	10	CMA 53.331	195 ± 60 <sup>7</sup>	1650–1950	1530–1950
	11	CMA 54.780	185 ± 55 <sup>7</sup>	1650–1950	1640–1950
	12	CMA TR15370/8 <sup>11</sup>	195 ± 45	1653–1955	1642–1955
	13	CMA 68.227	191 ± 45	1653–1954	1640–1954
			R) 181 ± 45 Av) 186 ± 32	1663–1955	1649–1955
14	CMA 66.23	224 ± 45	1645–1954	1527–1954	
		R) 125 ± 46 Av) 176 ± 32	1665–1955	1654–1955	
15	CMA 68.73	125 ± 50	1672–1955	1660–1955	
GROUP D	16	CMA 85.59	101.7 ± 0.7 <sup>7</sup>	modern	modern
	17	CMA 82.23	modern <sup>12</sup>	after 1950	after 1950

1. Calendar dates (A.D.) obtained from dendochronological calibration using 1 $\sigma$  (68% confidence limit).

2. Calendar dates (A.D.) obtained from dendochronological calibration using 2 $\sigma$  (95% confidence limit).

3. This result was discounted because of contamination due to the weak pretreatment used; the results were not averaged with the retest.

4. R = Retest.

5. Av = Weighted average.

6. The difference between the first test and the two retests led scientists at the Tucson laboratory to conclude that the original sample had been contaminated with the detergent Triton X-100; the results of the first test were not included in the average.

7. Test performed at the Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit, Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art, University of Oxford; all unspecified tests were performed at the NSF-Arizona AMS Facility, University of Arizona, Tucson.

8. This sample was pretreated with the standard pretreatment and extractions with hexane and ethanol.

9. This average is obtained from the Arizona and Zurich measurements; the error of the Oxford date quoted is less than two standard deviations from the average of the other two results.

10. Test performed at ETH/AMS Facility, Institut für Mittelenergiephysik, Eidgenössische Tech. Hochschule, Zurich.

11. Equivalent to I on table 1.

12. Sample contains bomb carbon-14.



standard deviation ranged from the mid-fifteenth to the mid-seventeenth century. These calibrated ages seem closest to the dates obtained for the textiles of group B. One of these textiles (I), however, when retested by AMS yielded results consistent with a BP date of  $195 \pm 45$ , in contrast to the earlier BP date of  $355 \pm 85$ . This AMS result now places that textile (12) in our group C. At two standard deviations, the calibrated ages obtained in the earlier liquid-scintillation tests for all four textiles ranged up to 1955, as does our group C. The other piece tested by liquid scintillation that was believed to be a medieval Persian silk (IV), a fragment of a border similar to that of the caftan (16), produced a calibrated age 1660–1955 at one standard deviation and would immediately be placed in our group C, as would VII, the copy made by Guicherd of textile 28 at Sens.

### *Conclusions and Implications*

Radiocarbon dating by AMS has shown that the tested textiles fall into at least three, if not four, distinct groups. Some of the textiles in this study (group A) are medieval in date, and they can be attributed with confidence to the period from the tenth to the twelfth century. Three of them (1, 3, and 4) can be traced to Acheroff, Read, or Nazare-Aga and lend support to King's contention that the silks associated with those men are medieval. The fourth textile in group A (2) has an unknown provenance and shows that pieces with no demonstrable link to the original finds at Rayy can also be medieval. As pre-Islamic textiles are known to have been excavated at other sites in Iran, such as Shahr-i Qūmis, it is logical that pieces have been or will be excavated at other sites and have other provenances.<sup>124</sup> It is therefore wrong to reject out of hand a textile not associated with Read, Acheroff, or Nazare-Aga without further tests. Textile 2 is a double weave with tabby binding like 3, the "Harpy" silk, and this similarity in weave supports King's contention that the textiles associated with the finds at Rayy can serve as a standard of comparison for other textiles. In addition to these two double weaves, group A includes a compound tabby (1) and a tabby with supplementary pattern weft (4). Despite the varieties of weave, all of these textiles are distinguished by a brittle condition.

Three of the four pieces in group A have inscriptions, which are consistently used as framing

elements around circles (2) or octagons (3), or as a running band framing ogival medallions (4). The texts include a pseudo-inscription (4) and typical formulas of good wishes invoking glory and prosperity to an unspecified owner (3). The surprising text was 2, which invokes good wishes to the *shaykh*, the *sayyid*, the one who aids [God], Abū Naṣr al-Mar (?) b. (?). It differs from the anonymous good wishes found on 3 and on other objects from early Islamic Iran. Instead of the standard glory and prosperity (*‘izz wa iqbāl*), the inscription asks for expansiveness and eminence (*baṣṭa wa ‘alā*). The first is a Sufi term meaning an extension of enthusiastic feeling and is the opposite of *qabḍ*, constraint.<sup>125</sup> The inscription also names a specific individual, although the damage at the end prevents him from being identified, but his title *shaykh* and the Sufi terminology used suggest that the piece was made for a mystic. The unusual text, like the floriated Kufic script used, is more characteristic of inscriptions from the end of the calibrated age ranges and suggests that this piece should be dated to the late eleventh or twelfth century. This piece shows both the advantages and the limitations of radiocarbon dating: it establishes a range, but other criteria, such as epigraphy and style, are necessary tools for refining the date within the range.

The textiles of group D (16 and 17) stand in complete contrast to the medieval ones: the presence of isotopes produced by atomic bombs and tests shows that they were made after 1950 with the intent to deceive. These forgeries include a complete tunic (16) as well as a large piece with a cutout for the neck. Both are lampas weaves, with a 3/1 twill Z ground and 1/2 twill S or Z pattern. The inscriptions on these two pieces are notable for providing far more information than expected, including the patron, artisan, date, and place of manufacture. The inscriptions are also distinguished by unusual titles and names, as well as numerous misspellings. Textile 17 has square cartouches with four lines of historical text. The cartouche is awkwardly superimposed over part of the pattern of octagons enclosing a lion attacking a camel. The first line of the inscription invokes the standard glory and prosperity to the most exalted amir, but his name on lines two and three, Abū'l-Raṣīs [?] Khalaf [?] b. Maṣṣūr al-Ṭawāḡhī [?], is so odd that most of it is illegible. The piece purports to have been made at an extremely early date (203/818–19) in Baghdad, which was normally referred to as Madīnat al-

Salām in inscriptions of that time, and the benediction invoked on the amir is one reserved for the caliph at this early date. Textile 16 has seven inscriptions ranging from the standard good wishes to petitions for God's mercy that paraphrase Koranic texts. According to the inscription on the back (F), it was made for Abū Muḥammad Ziyād b. Ḥamdān al-Faḍlī, by Aḥmad . . . al-Daylamī, who is otherwise unknown. In addition to the odd names, this text is peculiarly laid out so that the third line on the left reads before the fourth on the right.

The textiles of group C (7–15), by far the largest group (nine of the seventeen samples tested by AMS), produced results consistent with a dating between the mid-seventeenth century and 1950 at the 68 percent confidence level (early sixteenth century and 1950 at the 95 percent confidence level). Many of these textiles, in contrast to those of group A, have very slightly twisted warps. Their weaves, moreover, are predominantly lampas with 3/1 twill or broken twill bindings of the ground. Two of the textiles (11 and 12) are compound weaves, as are some of the Nazare-Aga/Acheroff/Read textiles. Textile 11, the pall in Cleveland, however, is distinguished by its combination of thin, slightly twisted warps and heavy, three-ply wefts and by its having been woven to shape, while 12 has weaving faults that led Vial to conclude it had been woven on a Jacquard loom.<sup>126</sup> Two of the lampas weaves of group C (14 and 15) have a tabby binding of the ground, as does one of the silks owned by Read.<sup>127</sup> Textile 14, however, has an unusual warp proportion of 1:1, while 15 curiously has blue fibers that either wrap or cover certain white main warps at irregular intervals along the starting edge. Since much of the starting edge is no longer preserved, it is impossible to observe the pattern of their occurrence and, hence, to deduce their function.

The textiles in group C differ from the others in having a much broader range and more learned selection of texts, including four that bear poetic texts. Three come from well-known works: 7 has a couplet from the *ḏiḡān* of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib about forgiveness and 9 has a couplet by Kaʿb b. Zuhayr about being carried off on a bier, while 10 has a more unusual selection with a specific historical referent: a panegyric that al-Mutanabbī composed for the Ikhshidid ruler Kāfūr about lions and a verse about God's justice and grace. The fourth poetic text, two lines on 15 about beauty and whiteness, is from an unknown, and

quite obscure, source.<sup>128</sup> This textile also bears a pious phrase about people of knowledge being guides, recalling such Koranic verses as 3:16 about those who possess knowledge and other verses about guidance; 8 has a similar pious text about Paradise. Four textiles in group C (11–14) name specific individuals. None of them can be identified, although two are exalted amirs (12 and 14) and one (13) has the title *al-ṣāḥib*, which suggests that he might have been a vizier. The person named on the pall (11) is called "the disobedient servant" (*al-ʿabd al-ʿāṣī*), a typically humble term for a pious text, but his name is unusual in being almost identical with that on another pall also woven to shape.<sup>129</sup>

The texts on group C textiles also vary in layout. Most have the traditional formats found in group A, either octagonal or circular frames (8, 12–15) or running bands framing ogival medallions (9), but three pieces have more unusual layouts like those of group D. Textile 7 has a two-line cartouche which, like the cartouche on 17, reads from the left side to the right. Textiles 10 and 11 have much larger and longer texts, and those on 11, the pall woven to shape, are spread all over the piece to correspond to positions on the body, like those on the caftan (16). The long band on 10 is distinguished by the use of Kufic with interlaced stems.

The period to which the textiles of group C have been dated corresponds to the "Stradivarius gap," which means that radiocarbon testing can reveal only a broad range rather than a specific date, and almost any date within the range is, from a scientific perspective, equally plausible. The textiles of group C, however, are not stylistically, iconographically, paleographically, or epigraphically similar to other textiles known to have been produced in Iran in the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, or nineteenth century. Although certain technical details, such as slightly twisted warps, lampas, and compound structures, are also found in some textiles known to have been produced in Iran between the sixteenth and the nineteenth century, the textiles of group C are distinguished by details of weave. It therefore seems likely that they began to be produced as forgeries in the early twentieth century, certainly before their first appearance in the literature of the 1930s and presumably after the original finds at Rayy in 1924–25. Although weaving flaws in many of the textiles are those typically found in silks woven on drawlooms, these flaws



cannot be used for dating purposes since drawlooms are known to have been used in Iran as recently as the 1970s, when *A Survey of Persian Handicraft* was published. According to this publication, "the workshops of the Ministry of Culture and Art [in Tehran] have a large battery of both draw looms and punched-card jacquards, installed in 1962 some 210 years after Jacquard developed them out of the draw loom."<sup>130</sup>

The most problematic group (B) consisted of two pieces (5 and 6), for which radiocarbon tests consistently produced results indicating dates in the period from the early sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century (68 percent probability) or the mid-fifteenth to the mid-seventeenth century (95 percent probability). The existence of two textiles woven with the same pattern but with different colors and binding systems is no reason to doubt the dates produced by carbon dating. Abundant precedents for this are known, for example, among Italian silks of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>131</sup> This was undoubtedly a common practice among weavers working on drawlooms, given the considerable amount of time required to prepare the loom. Moreover, the selvege occurring off-center to the vertical axis of the design in 5 and the 3/1 broken twill binding in 6 have precedents among eastern Islamic textiles from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>132</sup> Nevertheless, the closest epigraphic parallels are to textiles in group C. The text on these textiles is a pious phrase similar to those found on several textiles in group C (7, 8, and 10) and occurs in horizontal cartouches between the large roundels of the repeat pattern. Like the textiles of group C, those in group B are stylistically, iconographically, paleographically,

and epigraphically dissimilar to anything known from Iran in this period. While the possibility of an as-yet-unknown survival or revival of earlier styles and designs cannot be excluded, further tests are needed to clarify the validity and extent of this apparently retardataire group.

In addition to delineating different groups of Persian silks, the carbon-14 testing used in this study was important for several other reasons. It confirmed the conclusion reached in the testing of the Shroud of Turin that tests in different laboratories can be expected to produce consistent results. The reliability of the technique of carbon-14 testing by AMS is dramatically underscored by the similar results produced from the tests of three pieces known to have come from the same site (1, 3, and 4). The radiocarbon tests, moreover, confirmed that epigraphic criteria are useful and effective in distinguishing textiles of different date and that the rules of epigraphy are as valid for the study of objects as they are for buildings.

This study has shown that radiocarbon testing is an effective means of determining the age of silk textiles when combined with art-historical and epigraphic analysis. When used together, these techniques allowed us not only to distinguish the medieval textiles from the modern ones but also to distinguish two groups of modern forgeries: those produced between ca. 1930 and 1945 and those made after 1950. While both groups of forgeries were undoubtedly manufactured with the intent to deceive collectors and scholars, the textiles of the first group show a far more sophisticated knowledge of the style and epigraphy of textiles actually made in Iran in the medieval Islamic period.

## Notes

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1. D. G. Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks in Fact and Fancy (A Refutation of the Riggisberg Report)," *Bulletin de Liaison du Centre International d'Étude des Textiles Anciens* [hereafter *CIETA Bulletin*] 39–40 (1974): 137ff; D. King, "The Textiles Found near Rayy about 1925," *CIETA Bulletin* 65 (1987): 34–37.
2. E.g., Victoria and Albert Museum T. 128-1925 in *Review of the Principal Acquisitions during the Year 1925* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1927), 63 and pl. 34; M. S. D. [imand] "The New Persian Textiles," *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 25 (1930): 171, "found in a Seljuq tomb of about the twelfth century, at Rhages."
3. "Under the Seljuk Dynasty—1040 to 1194—damasks of exceptional quality, both artistically and technically, were produced. Of these only very few have survived and nowhere were more than two or three to be seen together. In a vitrine on the left wall [of Gallery II] are approximately twenty of these fabrics which in some respects represent the high-water mark of the textile art." *Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Persian Art at the Royal Academy of Arts, London: 7th January to 28th February 1931*, xv.

p.	no.	description and provenance
23	31	Silk tissue, Seljuk, XI c.; Schlossmuseum, Berlin
25	33	Silk tissue, Seljuk, XII c.
25	34	Silk tissue, medallions with winged lions among scrolls, violet on cream ground; Seljuk, X–XI c.; found at Rayy; Victoria and Albert Museum
26	38A	Silk tissue, decorated with animals, scrollwork, and Kufic inscriptions; XII c.; found in a Seljuk tomb at Rayy; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
26	38B	Silk tissue, medallion design . . . ; Seljuk, XI c.; found at Rayy; lent by Rowland Read, Esqr.
27	38F	Silk tissue, striped yellow, grey, and violet with a wide band of dark blue Kufic; XII c.; lent anonymously.

p.	no.	description and provenance
27	38G	Silk damask, XII c., yellow ground; lent anonymously
27	38H	Silk tissue, found at Bibi Shahr Banu near Rayy; Art Institute of Chicago
27	38J	Silk tissue, light blue . . . ; XII c.; lent anonymously
27	38K	Two fragments of cream silk damask; XI c.; lent by Mrs. Robert W. Bliss
27	38M	Silk tissue, XI c.; lent by Mrs. Robert W. Bliss
27	38N	Panel of silk tissue; Textile Museum, Washington, DC
28	39	Silk tissue (fragment); XII c.; excavated in Rayy; lent by Detroit Institute of Arts
28	40	Silk tissue; Persian or Byzantine, X–XI c.; published in <i>Burlington Mag.</i> , Jan. 1930; lent by M. Indjoudjian, Paris
28	42	Silk tissue, two cavaliers; Seljuk, X–XI c.; lent by M. Indjoudjian, Paris
37	62	Silk tissue; Seljuk, XI–XII c.; lent by M. Nazare-Aga, Paris
37	66	Silk tissue; Persia or Mesopotamia, XI–XII c.; Textile Museum, Washington, DC
38	72	Silk tissue; Seljuk, XIII c.; excavated at Bibi-Shahr-Banu, a hill near Rayy; Victoria and Albert Museum, London

4. *L'Exposition persane de 1931* (Cairo: Musée National de l'Art Arabe, 1933), 7, no. 3 and pl. XXVI, later acquired by the Textile Museum, Washington, DC.
5. London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1939. A. U. Pope and Phyllis Ackerman, "The Most Important Textile Ever Found in Persia," *Illustrated London News* 112 (9 January 1943): 48, quoted in Gaston Wiet, *Soieries Persanes* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1947), 3.
6. This seems to be the first time that a specific number of textiles from the site was mentioned. Ackerman stated that forty-three of the textiles in her catalogue of sixty early silks came from the site; see A. U. Pope and Phyllis Ackerman, *A Survey of Persian Art* [hereafter *Survey*], 6 vols. (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1938–39; rpt., 1965–67 in 12 vols.; vols 13–15 pub. 1967–77), 3:1998 n. 5.
7. *Survey* 3:1991.
8. Pope and Ackerman, "Most Important Textile," 48–49, quoted in Wiet, *Soieries*, 3.



9. King, "Textiles Found near Rayy," 34–59.
10. Pope and Ackerman, "Most Important Textile." It was later purchased by the Textile Museum as 3.230.
11. Mehmet Aga-Oglu, "Masterpieces of Persian Art," *Art Bulletin* 29 (1947): 53–60; Pope's reply, 284–87; Aga Oglu's reply, *Art Bulletin* 30 (1948): 162–64; M. S. Dimand, "Masterpieces of Persian Art, by A. U. Pope," *Gazette des beaux-arts*, ser. 6, 35 (Nov.–Dec. 1947): 187.
12. The pieces were subsequently acquired by:
  - I Washington, Textile Museum 3.253 (Sasanian)  
(Other pieces: New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery 1945.358a and b; Riggisberg, Abegg Stiftung 189)
  - II Riggisberg, Abegg Stiftung 188 (Sassanian)
  - III Cleveland Museum of Art 55.52
  - IV Riggisberg, Abegg Stiftung 1144  
(Other piece: Cleveland Museum of Art 61.34)
  - V Riggisberg, Abegg Stiftung 746
  - VI Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 50.3428
  - VII Washington, Textile Museum 3.241
  - VIII Washington, Textile Museum 3.256  
(Other pieces: Riggisberg, Abegg Stiftung 676 and 1107)
  - IX Cleveland Museum of Art 62.264  
(Other pieces: Riggisberg, Abegg Stiftung 678; Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery 83.703)
  - X Cleveland Museum of Art 53.434  
(Other pieces: Montreal, Museum of Fine Arts; Washington, Textile Museum 3.242)
  - XI Karachi, museum  
(Other pieces: Cleveland Museum of Art 75.38; Riggisberg, Abegg Stiftung 674; Washington, Textile Museum 3.240)
  - XII Karachi, museum
  - XIII Karachi, museum
  - XIV Riggisberg, Abegg Stiftung 79  
(Other piece: Cleveland Museum of Art 66.23)
  - XV Karachi, museum  
(Other piece: Riggisberg, Abegg Stiftung 883)
  - XVI Cleveland Museum of Art 68.73
  - XVII New York, Cooper-Hewitt 1961.96.1  
(Other pieces: Cleveland Museum of Art 66.134; Riggisberg, Abegg Stiftung 1103)
  - XVIII Cleveland Museum of Art 66.135  
An inscribed gold ewer, also published by Wiet, was acquired by The Cleveland Museum of Art (66.22).
13. D. G. Shepherd, "The Archaeology of the Buyid Textiles," *Archaeological Textiles* (Irene Emery Roundtable on Museum Textiles, 1974 Proceedings), ed. P. L. Fiske (Washington, DC: Textile Museum, 1975), 177.
14. Florence Day, "Soieries persanes. By Gaston Wiet," *Ars Islamica* 15–16 (1951): 231–44.
15. Day, "Soieries," 232.
16. Day, "Soieries," 236.
17. Gaston Wiet, "Réponse à Miss Florence Day," *Ars Islamica* 15–16 (1951): 244–50.
18. This is not exactly true, as a piece lent by the Metropolitan Museum and exhibited in London in 1931 (Gallery II, Case 38A) is a silk tissue "found in a Seljuk tomb at Rayy," which is decorated with animals, scrollwork, and Kufic inscriptions and attributed to the twelfth century. See *Catalogue of the International Exhibition*, 26, and D. [imand], "New Persian Textiles," 171. Is this the "Ayyubid silk found at Rayy" illustrated on p. 102, fig. 8, of D. G. Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks"? According to Donald King, "Textiles Found near Rayy," 53, this piece belonged to Pope and was photographed at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1930. Another fragment was bought by the Musée de Cluny in the same year; Pope sold almost the whole of the rest of the loom-piece to G. H. Myers in 1932 (TM 3.209).
19. Florence E. Day, "Miss Day's Reply," *Ars Islamica* 15–16 (1951): 250–51.
20. Arthur Upham Pope, "History of the Four Congresses of the International Association for Iranian Art & Archaeology," *Survey* 14 (1967): 2881.
21. *Survey*, vol. 13-fascicle, Addendum A: *The Andarz Nama* (London, 1968), with contributions by Pope, Richard Ettinghausen, Richard N. Frye, Ehsan Yar-Shater, Linda Bettman, Phyllis Ackerman, Rutherford J. Gettens, and Oleg Grabar.
22. E. Kühnel, "Some Observations of Buyid Silks," *Survey* 14:3808–89 and Dorothy G. Shepherd, "Technical Aspects of the Buyid Silks," *Survey* 14: 3090–3100. Other defenders of the silks in the 1950s and early 1960s included Roman Ghirshman and Adele C. Wiebel. See Shepherd, "Archaeology of the Buyid Textiles," 178.
23. *Survey* 14:3091.
24. In 1960 Shepherd knew thirty textiles to add to the seventy-four published at that time; between 1960

and 1967 an additional twelve textiles (or photographs thereof) had passed through her hands. She was also able to add long-known silks from Berlin and Maastricht to the corpus.

25. *Survey* 14:3097.
26. Mechthild Lemberg, "The Buyid Silks of the Abegg Foundation, Berne," *CIETA Bulletin* 37 (1973): 28–43; Gabriel Vial, "Technical Studies on the Buyid Silk Fabrics of the Abegg Foundation—Berne," *CIETA Bulletin* 37 (1973): 70–80, and Judith H. Hoffenck-De Graaff, "Dyestuff Analysis of the Buyid Silk Fabrics of the Abegg Foundation, Bern," *CIETA Bulletin* 37 (1973): 120–33.
27. Dorothy G. Shepherd, "In Defence of the Persian Silks," *CIETA Bulletin* 37 (1973): 143–45.
28. G. Vial, "The Buyid Fabrics," *CIETA Bulletin* 38 (1973): 33–38; J. H. Hoffenck-De Graaff, "About Dyestuff Analysis of the Buyid Silks," *CIETA Bulletin*, 38 (1973): 39–40; M. Salzman, "Statement of Professor Salzman," *CIETA Bulletin* 38 (1973): 44–46; M.-Th. Picard-Schmitter, "The Condemnation of 31 Silks in the Abegg Collection: Is It Definitive?" *CIETA Bulletin* 38 (1973): 87–111; G. Vial, "Provisional Reply to the Article by Mme Picard," *CIETA Bulletin* 38 (1973): 117–21.
29. Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks," 1–239.
30. Shepherd, "Archaeology of the Buyid Textiles."
31. Nobuko Kajitani, "The Physical Characteristics of Silk Generally Classified as 'Buyid' (10–13th Century A.D., Persia)," *Irene Emery Roundtable on Museum Textiles, 1974*, 191–204.
32. See, for example, Janine Sourdel-Thomine and Bertold Spuler, *Die Kunst des Islam* (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1973), color pl. xxix, or Richard Ettinghausen and Oleg Grabar, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 650–1250* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1987), 334–36, where pieces in London (Victoria and Albert Museum) and Berlin (Museum für Islamische Kunst) are illustrated.
33. King, "Textiles Found near Rayy," 34–59.
34. His readings are gathered in two notebooks, one with the pieces in the Cleveland Museum of Art arranged by accession number and the other (here called Glidden catalogue) with non-CMA pieces arranged under the numbering system used by Dorothy Shepherd: B (silks known before the publication of the *Survey* in 1939; S (silks published in the *Survey*); W (silks published in 1947 by Wiet in *Soieries Persanes*); N (silks published by neither Pope nor Wiet but known at the time); D (silks discovered by Dorothy Shepherd). We have given these Glidden catalogue numbers as well as museum acquisition numbers and the numbers used by King, "Textiles Found near Rayy."
35. Most of these pieces were in the hands of people associated with the discoveries at Rayy in 1925, such as Nazare-Aga, Read, Ashton, or Acheroff; see Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks," fig. 12, p. 103, and King, "Textiles Found near Rayy."
36. Ernst Kühnel, "Die Kunst Persiens unter den Buyiden," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 106 (1956): 78–92.
37. Esin Atıl, W. T. Chase, and Paul Jett, *Islamic Metalwork in the Freer Gallery of Art* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985); Glenn Lowry, "On the Gold Jug Inscribed to Abu Mansur al-Amir Bakhtiyar ibn Mu'izz al-Dawla in the Freer Gallery of Art," *Ars Orientalis* 19 (1989): 103–15; Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, "La Coupe d'Abu Sahl-e Farhad-jerdi," *Gazette des beaux-arts* 71 (1968): 129–46.
38. Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World 8–18th Centuries* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1982); Eva Baer, *Metalwork in Medieval Islamic Art* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983); and Boris Marschak, *Silberschätze des Orients* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1986).
39. Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, "Essais sur la sociologie de l'art islamique—I. Argenterie et féodalité dans l'Iran médiéval," *Art et Société dans le Monde Iranien*, ed. C. Adle (Paris: Institut français d'iranologie de Téhéran, 1982), 158–62, lists (1–2) two jugs from the tenth or early eleventh century; (3) a wine service made for the amir Abū'l-ʿAbbās Valgīn, client of the Commander of the Faithful, ca. 1000; (4) an eleventh-century bottle made for Abū ʿAlī Aḥmad b. Shādhān, who was vizier to the Seljuq rulers Chaghri Beg and Alp Arslān; (5) an eleventh-century ewer made for the *shaykh* Abū'l Faḍl; (6) a kohl container for the exalted amir, Abū ʿAlī Ḥasan b. Yaʿqūb Saltūz; and (7) a tray made for the Khwarazmshah Abā Ibrāhīm. All but the wine service, now in the Iran Bastan Museum, Tehran, are in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg.
40. Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks," Appendix E-1, p. 210.
41. Lisa Golombek generously provided notes and



illustrations of the piece.

42. Sheila S. Blair, *The Monumental Inscriptions from Early Islamic Iran and Transoxiana* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), no. 10, pp. 41–46, which argues that the date reflects the time they were envisioned when ‘Adud al-Dawla first entered Mesopotamia, although the work was not carried out until he was in full control in 367/977.
43. Ernst Herzfeld reported that he had owned a poor imitation of panel C done by a woodworker from Abada but that the Iranian government considered it a national treasure and forbade its export, although the original had already been exported. See *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum, Inscriptions et Monuments d'Alep* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1954–56), 157 n. 1.
44. Illustrated in *Survey*, pl. 1461. The test produced a radiocarbon date of  $250 \pm 75$  years BP [Before Present], and the doors have been classified as “modern in the style of the late 11th century.” Our thanks to the staff of the Freer Gallery for providing this information; for radiocarbon dating, see below, pp. 10–13.
45. Chahryar Adle, “Recherches archéologiques en Iran sur le Kumes médiéval. Rapport préliminaire pour 1982–1983,” *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Comptes Rendus des Séances de l'Année 1984* (April–June 1984), 292–97.
46. Paul E. Chevedden, “A Samanid Tombstone from Nishapur,” *Ars Orientalis* 16 (1986): 153–70.
47. M. N. Khanikoff, “Les inscriptions musulmanes du Caucase,” *Journal Asiatique* (August 1862), 57–155.
48. Irāj Afshār, *Yādgārkhā-yi Yazd*, 3 vols. (Tehran: Anjumān-i Athār-i Millī, 1348–54/1969–75), 2: 909–17 and 3: 1319–23, and Irāj Afshār, “Two 12th-Century Gravestones of Yazd,” *Studia Iranica* 2 (1973): 203–11.
49. Nicholas Lowick, *Siraf XV: The Coins and Monumental Inscriptions* (London: British Institute of Persian Studies, 1985).
50. Seventy-nine examples dating before 500/1106 are included in Blair, *Monumental Inscriptions*.
51. Translated by Elie Salem, *The Rules and Regulations of the ‘Abbasid Court* (Beirut: American University Press, 1977).
52. Lutz Richter-Bernburg, “Amīr-Malik-Shāhānshāh: ‘Adud al-Dawla’s Titulature Re-examined,” *Iran* 18 (1980): 83–102.
53. Glidden catalogue S12, illustrated in Shepherd, “Medieval Persian Silks,” fig. 11, and *Arts of Islam* (London: Hayward Gallery, 1976), no. 5.
54. The inscription is published in *Répertoire Chronologique d’épigraphie arabe* [hereafter *RCEA*], ed. Étienne Combe, Jean Sauvaget, and Gaston Wiet, 17 vols. (Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 1931–), vol. 6, no. 2177.
55. H. F. Amedroz and D. S. Margoliouth, eds. and trans., *Eclipse of the ‘Abbasid Caliphate*, 7 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1920–21), text 3:401, translation 6:429.
56. Glidden catalogue N8; King’s R2; illustrated in Shepherd, “Medieval Persian Silks,” fig. 12h.
57. *RCEA*, vol. 5, no. 1956.
58. Glidden catalogue B5; Ernst Kühnel, *Islamische Stoffe aus ägyptischen Gräbern* (Berlin: Wasmuth, 1927), 81; Shepherd, “Medieval Persian Silks,” fig. 10, p. 102.
59. Blair, *Monumental Inscriptions*, no. 18, pp. 60–62.
60. Glidden catalogue S13; the inscription is published in *RCEA*, vol. 7, no. 2577.
61. Glidden catalogue D73, recorded in 1973 in the hands of the dealer Amini.
62. Glidden catalogue B1; full publication by M. Bernus, H. Marchal, and G. Vial, “Le suaire de Saint Josse,” *CIETA Bulletin* 33 (1971).
63. Glidden catalogue S31; King, “Textiles Found near Ray,” 53; pieces in the Textile Museum 3.213, Abegg 451, and Detroit Institute of Art 44.113. Illustrated in Ettinghausen and Grabar, *Art and Architecture of Islam*, fig. 261. It passed through the hands of the dealer Indjoudjian.
64. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954–; hereafter *EI/2*), s.v. “Ispahbadh.”
65. *RCEA*, vol. 1, no. 116; Blair, *Monumental Inscriptions*, no. 31, pp. 85–87; it also occurs on a silver dish in name of the Bawandid amir Ḥusām al-Dawla Shahryār b. Qārīn 466–503/1074–1110, for which see James Allan, “A Silver Dish of Shahryār ibn Qārīn (1074–1110 A.D.),” *Octagon* 18 (1981): 19–20.
66. Inscription published in *RCEA*, vol. 7, no. 2640.
67. See n. 39 (3) above; the inscriptions on the pieces are published in *RCEA*, vol. 6, nos. 2154–60; the ewer is illustrated in Ettinghausen and Grabar, *Art*

- and Architecture of Islam*, fig. 258.
68. Glidden catalogue W6 (Wiet, *Soieries*, VI; Boston Museum of Fine Arts 50.3428 and Amini) and N15 (Textile Museum 3.254).
  69. CMA 66.23, 68.225, 82.23, and 15730/8; Glidden catalogue N1 (Textile Museum 3.230, a large double-faced silk dated 384/994, illustrated in Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks," figs. 38–40), N11 (a pall made for 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Shahrzād b. Rustām) and D98 (a silk with a double-headed eagle in the collection of Amini in 1987).
  70. Blair, *Monumental Inscriptions*, no. 35, pp. 96–97.
  71. Blair, *Monumental Inscriptions*, nos. 12, 13, 20, and 29; *EI*/2, s.v. "Hasanwayh."
  72. Glidden catalogue N1, see n. 36 above.
  73. CMA 61.34, Abegg 1144, Kevorkian foundation; see Wiet, *Soieries*, IV.
  74. Glidden catalogue W6; see n. 68 above.
  75. CMA 68.225, Abegg 746, and Amini; Wiet, *Soieries*, V. The benediction reads *aṭāla allāh baqāh fi'l-ma'ālī wa ḥarasa fi iqtifā'h al-makārim fanāh* (may God prolong his remaining in high office and protect him against his weaknesses as he follows in the footsteps of men of noble character).
  76. See nn. 53–54 above.
  77. CMA 68.228, illustrated in Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks," fig. 51.
  78. Blair, *Monumental Inscriptions*, 158.
  79. Glidden catalogue N15 (Textile Museum 3.254).
  80. CMA 54.780. See Dorothy Shepherd, "A Pall from the Tomb of 'Alī ibn Muhammad," *Cleveland Museum of Art Bulletin* 49 (1962): 72–79; illustrated in Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks," fig. 26.
  81. Glidden catalogue N11 (Textile Museum 3.252).
  82. CMA 68.227, Textile Museum 3.241, Boston Museum of Fine Arts; Asana Collection, Tokyo; and Keir Collection, Richmond; see Wiet, *Soieries*, VII; illustrated in Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks," fig. 41.
  83. Glidden catalogue N17 (Textile Museum 3.257, Abegg 1101).
  84. CMA 78.173 and 82.17, 82.23, and 88.99; pieces of all three are also in the hands of the dealer Amini.
  85. The earliest extant one is the foundation inscription for the Kalhur Bridge ordered by Badr b. Hasanwayh in 374/984–85; Blair, *Monumental Inscriptions*, no. 12, pp. 49–50.
  86. Florence Day "Dated Ṭirāz in the Collection of the University of Michigan," *Ars Islamica* 4 (1937), no. 8. Baghdad as a name appears on the "Baghdad" silk (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts), actually made in Spain in the fifth/eleventh or early sixth/twelfth century (Florence Day, "The Inscription of the Boston 'Baghdad' Silk: A Note on Method in Epigraphy," *Ars Orientalis* 1 [1954]: 191–94, illustrated in Ettinghausen and Grabar, *Art and Architecture of Islam*, fig. 139).
  87. King's N1, a silk with sphinxes and peacocks (CMA 39.506, Abegg 51, Victoria and Albert T128-1925, and elsewhere; Shepherd did not consider it Persian so it is not included in the Glidden catalogue; illustrated in Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks," fig. 49).
  88. King's N2 (Boston Museum of Fine Arts 31.402, Textile Museum T396, Abegg 449, and elsewhere); no. 9 in Ackerman's list in the *Survey*, which mentions the inscription, although the piece is not included in Glidden's catalogue.
  89. King's R1 (Dumbarton Oaks 30.1, Abegg 478, and elsewhere); Glidden catalogue S23; Shepherd's Read, no. 5, illustrated in "Medieval Persian Silks," fig. 12e.
  90. King's R4 (Cluny 21.198, Textile Museum 73.663, and elsewhere); Glidden catalogue S64; Shepherd's Read, no. 7, illustrated in "Medieval Persian Silks," fig. 12g.
  91. King's R5 (Cluny 21.591); Glidden catalogue S24.
  92. King's R9 (Abegg 655 and Dumbarton Oaks 26.1); Glidden catalogue S21; Shepherd's Read, no. 1, illustrated in "Medieval Persian Silks," fig. 12a.
  93. See n. 6 above.
  94. See also Wiet, *Soieries*, 184–89.
  95. Glidden catalogue S40 (Yale 1937.4612), S44 (Textile Museum 3.169), S45 (Textile Museum 3.168), S46 (Yale 1937.4613), S51 (Textile Museum 3.167 and Detroit Institute of Art 31.59), D3 (Loewe 17), D70 (Abegg 450), CMA 53.331 (also Textile Museum 3.202), and CMA 85.59.
  96. Glidden catalogue S14 (present whereabouts unknown), S18 (Yale 1937.4615), S39 (Yale 1937.4611), and S43 (Textile Museum 3.199 and Rhode Island 36.010).



97. Glidden catalogue S22 (Victoria and Albert T94-1937, Yale 1937.4609, and Detroit 54.239) and S50 (Cluny 21.394, Metropolitan Museum of Art 30.67, Abegg 677, and Textile Museum 3.209, illustrated in Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks," fig. 2, p. 99), and CMA 66.134 (also Abegg 1103, CU 1961.96, and Amini).
98. CMA 75.38 (also Abegg 674, Textile Museum 3.240, and Karachi); see Wiet, *Soieries*, XI.
99. CMA 62.264 (also Abegg 678 and Walters Art Gallery 83.703); illustrated in Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks," fig. 1, and Ettinghausen and Grabar, *Art and Architecture of Islam*, no. 6.
100. CMA 53.331 (also Textile Museum 3.202); illustrated in Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks," fig. 56.
101. Glidden catalogue N2 (Textile Museum 3.283).
102. See R. A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (London: T. Fisher-Unwin, 1907; rpt., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 305.
103. See Lisa Volov [Golombek], "Plaited Kufic on Samanid Epigraphic Pottery," *Ars Orientalis* 6 (1966): 107-35.
104. Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork*, 73-74.
105. Wiet, *Soieries*, 91-98 and pl. XX.
106. Blair, *Monumental Inscriptions*, no. 28, pp. 80-81.
107. Melikian-Chirvani, *Iranian Metalwork*, 143-44.
108. Glidden catalogue B6; M. Minovi, "A Persian Quatrain on a Dyed Silk," *Bulletin of the American Institute for Iranian Art and Archaeology* 5 (Dec. 1937): 170-71.
109. Oliver Watson, *Persian Lustre Ware* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985).
110. Madrasī Ṭabaṭabā'ī, *Turbat-i Pākān* (Qum: Mihr, 35), 1:46-71.
111. Melikian-Chirvani, *Iranian Metalwork*, ch. 5.
112. E.g., the tombstone dated 538/1143-44 for Sayyid Shihāb al-dīn Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. 'Alī (Seattle Art Museum), Afshār, "Two 12th-Century Gravestones," no. 34.
113. A. J. Timothy Jull and Douglas J. Donahue, "Radiocarbon Dating with Accelerators: Methods and Applications to Textiles," *Orientalia* 21/6 (June 1990): 75-79.
114. Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks," 74-76; Appendix E-1.
115. Our IX corresponds to Shepherd's 10, as her 9 was a sample of wood from a coffin from Rayy, now in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Testing it produced results consistent with a date of BP 1010 ± 100, or A.D. 970.
116. As explained by Jull and Donahue, "Radiocarbon Dating," 77, an error of one standard deviation (1  $\sigma$  [sigma]) "is such that if many measurements were made on a collection of identical samples, 68% of the results would fall within the range defined by the quoted plus-or-minus standard deviation. This range is often referred to as a 68% 'confidence interval.' Two standard deviations define a 95% confidence interval. Thus 95% of all measurements on identical samples would fall within a range of plus or minus 2  $\sigma$ ."
117. This textile has caused some confusion: as far as we can determine, there was only one piece of it, a yellow and brown plaid silk, excavated by Schmidt at Rayy. It is now RN-6948 in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The Museum files contain Texas Bionuclear's report of a calculated age of 985 ± 50.
118. Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks," 74-75.
119. P. E. Damon, D. J. Donahue, et al., "Radiocarbon Dating of the Shroud of Turin," *Nature* 337/6208 (February 1989): 611-15, and G. Harbottle and W. Heino, "Carbon Dating the Shroud of Turin: A Test of Recent Improvements in the Technique," *Archaeological Chemistry* 4, ed. R. O. Allen (Washington, DC, 1989): 313-20.
120. Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks," 78-79.
121. Vial, "Technical Studies," 90-102.
122. Letter of 18 September 1990 from Jodi Barnhill.
123. Jull and Donahue, "Radiocarbon Dating," 76.
124. See Trudy Kawami, "Ancient Textiles from Shahr-i Qumis," *Hali* 59 (October 1991): 95-99, for the pre-Islamic textiles found at the site.
125. Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 128-29.
126. "Technical Studies," 90ff.

127. King, "Textiles Found near Rayy," 39 and 52, R6.
128. The obscurity of these verses is underscored by the fact that they remain unknown to several leading experts in the field of medieval Arabic poetry.
129. TM 3.252 has the same name, father's name, and grandfather's name but a different great-grandfather (Rustām instead of Rāstawayh).
130. J. Gluck and Sumi Hiramoto-Gluck, eds., *A Survey of Persian Handicraft* (Tehran, 1977), 210–12.
131. Anne E. Wardwell, "The Stylistic Development of 14th- and 15th-Century Italian Silk Design," *Aachener Kunstblätter* 47 (1976–77), figs 44a and b, fig. 61, and n. 164.
132. Anne E. Wardwell, "*Panni Tartarici*: Eastern Islamic Silks Woven with Gold and Silver (13th and 14th Centuries)," *Islamic Art* 3 (1989): 95–173.



## APPENDIX

*Technical Analyses of Textiles Carbon-Dated by Accelerator Mass Spectroscopy (AMS)*

The terminology used in these analyses conforms to that established by the Centre International des Textiles Anciens and published in C.I.E.T.A., *Vocabulary of Technical Terms* (Lyons, 1964) and in Dorothy K. Burnham, *Warp and Weft: A Textile Terminology* (Toronto, 1980). The following abbreviations have been used in this appendix:

Abegg	Abegg-Stiftung, Riggisberg, Switzerland
Ackerman, 1940	Phyllis Ackerman, <i>Guide to the Exhibition of Persian Art</i> (New York: Iranian Institute of America, 1940)
Boston	Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts
CIETA Bulletin	<i>Bulletin de Liaison du Centre International d'Étude des Textiles Anciens</i>
CMA Bulletin	<i>Bulletin of The Cleveland Museum of Art</i>
CMA Handbook	<i>Handbook of The Cleveland Museum of Art</i>
Detroit	The Detroit Institute of Art, Detroit, Michigan
King, 1987	Donald King, "The Textiles Found near Rayy about 1925," <i>Bulletin de Liaison du Centre International d'Études Textiles Anciens</i> , no. 65 (1987)
Koechlin, 1928	R. Koechlin and G. Migeon, <i>Cent planches en couleurs d'art musulman</i> (Paris: A. Lévy, 1928)
Kühnel, 1964	Ernst Kühnel, "Some Observations on Buyid Silks," in A.-U. Pope, <i>A Survey of Persian Art</i> 14 (Ashiya/New York: Society of Persian Art, 1964)
Lemberg, 1973	Mechthild Lemberg, "Les Soieries Bouyides de la Fondation Abegg ag Berne," <i>Bulletin de Liaison du Centre International d'Étude des Textiles Anciens</i> , no. 37, (1973)
London	Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England
London, 1931	<i>Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Persian Art</i> (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1931)
New Haven	Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut
New York	Cooper-Hewitt Museum, New York, New York
Paris-Cluny	Musée de Cluny, Paris, France
Paris-Décoratifs	Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, France
Paris, 1961	<i>Sept mille ans d'art en Iran</i> (Paris: Musée du Petit Palais, 1961)
Pope, 1945	Arthur Upham Pope, <i>Masterpieces of</i>

*Persian Art* (New York: Dryden Press, 1945)

Reath, 1937	Nancy Andrews Reath and Eleanor B. Sachs, <i>Persian Textiles</i> (New Haven: Yale University Press for the Pennsylvania Museum of Art, 1937)
Shepherd, 1974	Dorothy G. Shepherd, "Medieval Persian Silks in Fact and Fancy," <i>Bulletin de Liaison du Centre International d'Étude des Textiles Anciens</i> , no. 39-40 (1974)
Shepherd, 1975	Dorothy G. Shepherd, "The Archaeology of the Buyid Textiles," <i>Archaeological Textiles</i> [Irene Emery Roundtable on Museum Textiles, 1974 Proceedings] (Washington, D.C.: Textile Museum, 1975)
Survey	Arthur Upham Pope and Phyllis Ackerman, <i>A Survey of Persian Art</i> , vol. 3, (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1939)
Tarrasa	Museu Textil, Tarrasa (Barcelona), Spain
TM	Textile Museum, Washington, DC
Vial, 1973	Gabriel Vial, "Étude Technique des Soieries Bouyides de la Fondation Abegg à Berne," <i>Bulletin de Liaison de Centre International d'Étude des Textiles Anciens</i> , no. 37, (1973)
Weibel, 1944	Adèle Coulin Weibel, <i>2000 Years of Silk Weaving</i> (New York: E. Weythe, 1944)
Weibel, 1952	Adèle Coulin Weibel, <i>Two Thousand Years of Textiles</i> (New York: Pantheon Books, 1952)
Wiet, Soieries	Gaston Wiet, <i>Soieries persanes</i> (Cairo: Institut d'Égypte, 1947).

(1)

Accession No.	CMA 75.45 (Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mallon)
Size	Warp: 47 cm (18½"); weft: 26.7 cm (10½")
Other pieces	London, T. 254-1927.
Publication	Unpublished, but other pieces published in: Reath, 1937, 76, no. 18; <i>Survey</i> , 2015 and 2036, cat. no. 32; King, 1987, 38 and 52 [no. A2].
Warp	Main: tan silk, poil Z Binding: tan silk, poil Z, 2 ply Z (slight ply) Proportion: 2 main warps to 1 binding warp



FIG. 4. Silk textile. CMA 75.45.

Step: 2 main warps  
 Count: 44 main warps and 22 binding warps per cm

*Weft* 1: blue silk, tram  
 2: tan (faded from red) silk, tram  
 3: tan (faded from green [?]) silk, tram  
 Pass: 3 wefts  
 Step: 1 pass  
 Count: 36 passes per cm

*Weave* Compound tabby  
 Selvage: none preserved

*Inscription* None

(2)

*Accession No.* CMA 68.246 (Gift of Ayyub Rabenou)

*Size* Warp: 27.9 cm (11"); weft: 25.4 cm (10")

*Publication* CMA Bulletin 56, no.1 (Jan. 1969), "Year in Review for 1968," illus. 48, listed 7; CMA Handbook (1991), 34.

*Warp* A: dark brown silk, poil Z (strong twist)  
 B: tan silk, poil Z (strong twist)  
 Proportion: 1 to 1  
 Step: 4 warps (2 on face, 2 on reverse)  
 Count: 96 per cm (48 on face, 48 on reverse)

*Weft* A: dark brown silk, tram  
 B: tan silk, tram  
 Pass: 1 brown and 1 tan weft  
 Step: 1 pass  
 Count: 48 per cm (24 on face, 24 on reverse)

*Weave* Double weave  
 Tabby binding of warp A with weft A and warp B with weft B  
 Selvage: none preserved

*Inscription* Location: around the edge of a circle, repeated in mirror reverse  
 Script: floriated Kufic  
 Type: good wishes for named individual  
 Text:

... ويسطه وعلاء للشيد [خ] السيد المنصور المويد  
 ابي نصر المر... بن



FIG. 5. Silk textile. CMA 68.246.



Translation: . . . and expansiveness and eminence to the shaykh, the sayyid, the victorious, the one who aids [God], Abū Naṣr al-Mar (?) ibn (?)

(3)

*Accession No.* TM 73.663 ("Harpy Silk")

*Size* Warp: 12.2 cm (4 7/8"); weft: 17.5 cm (6 7/8")

*Other pieces* Paris-Cluny; London, T.399-1980 (fig. 7)

*Publication* Unpublished, but other pieces published in: *Survey*, 1998 n. 5; Kühnel, 1964, 3081, fig. 1144; Shepherd, 1974, 103, fig. 12g; Shepherd, 1975, 176, fig. 1g

*Warp* A: dark brown silk, poil Z  
B: cream silk, poil Z  
Proportion: 1 brown warp to 1 cream warp  
Step: 6 warps (3 on face, 3 on reverse)  
Count: not obtained

*Weft* A: dark brown silk, tram  
B: cream silk, tram  
Pass: 1 brown and 1 cream weft  
Step: 2 passes  
Count: not obtained

*Weave* Double weave  
Tabby binding of warp A with weft A and warp B with weft B  
Selvage: none preserved



FIG. 6. Silk textile. Washington, TM 73.663.



FIG. 7. Silk textile, larger fragment of (3). Top: warp: 107 cm; weft: 30 cm. Bottom: warp: 78 cm; weft: 56 cm. Courtesy of the Board of Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum, T.399-1980.

Design oriented to the warp direction. In one fragment the pattern reverses direction in the middle; in the other the two vertical repeats are in the same direction

**Inscription** Location: around the edge of an octagon, repeated in mirror reverse  
Script: simple Kufic  
Type: good wishes for anonymous owner  
Text:

عز واقبال ونعمة وسعادة وسلامة وسرور  
دائمة [sic] لصاحبه [ا] طال عمره

Translation: Glory and prosperity and ease and felicity and lasting well-being and enduring happiness to its owner, may his life be long.

#### (4)

**Accession No.** CMA 39.506 (Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund)

**Size** Warp: 23.5 cm (9¼"); weft: 22.8 cm (9")

**Other pieces** Abegg, no. 51; Paris-Décoratifs; Boston, no. 31.403; London, no. T.128-1925; Tarasana, no. 204.

**Publication** Weibel, 1952, no. 102, p. 108; Shepherd,

1974, fig. 49c, pp. 13, 18, 56; *CMA Handbook* (1991), 44; other pieces published in: London, *Review of the Principal Acquisitions during the Year 1925* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1927), 63, pl. 34; Koechlin, 1928, pl. 62; London, 1931, no. 72; Reath, 1937, no. 20, p. 77 and pl. 20; *Survey*, 1998 n. 5; Lemberg, 1973, no. 51; Shepherd, 1974, 13, 18, 56, 125-26, fig. 49 a-c; King, 1987, N1, pp. 37 and 52

**Warp** Main: tan silk, poil Z (every 5th warp used also as a binding warp for pattern weft)  
Step: 2 warps, but sometimes 3 to include a warp used for binding  
Count: 72 warps per cm

**Weft** Ground: tan silk, tram  
Pattern: green (discolored to tan in most areas) silk, tram  
Pass: 1 ground and 1 pattern weft  
Step: 1 pass  
Count: 35 passes per cm

**Weave** Tabby with supplementary pattern weft  
Ground: tabby binding of ground wefts by main warps  
Pattern: tabby binding of pattern wefts on face and, when not required for pattern, on reverse by every 5th warp  
Selvage: none preserved

**Inscription** Location: running wavy band outlining ogival medallions  
Script: pseudo-Kufic  
Type: pseudo-inscription

#### (5)

**Accession No.** CMA 50.84 (Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund)

**Size** Warp: 39.6 cm (15½"); weft: 45.4 cm (17¾")

**Publication** Dorothy G. Shepherd, "A Persian Textile of the Buyid Period," *CMA Bulletin*, (March 1954), 53-55; *CMA Handbook*, (1958), no. 667; Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Museum of Art, *Persian Art (Before and after the Mongol Conquest)* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1959), no. 109, pp. 40 and 66; *CMA Handbook* (1969), 215 and (1978), 272.

**Warp** Main: creamy white silk, poil Z (spun unevenly so some are almost twice as

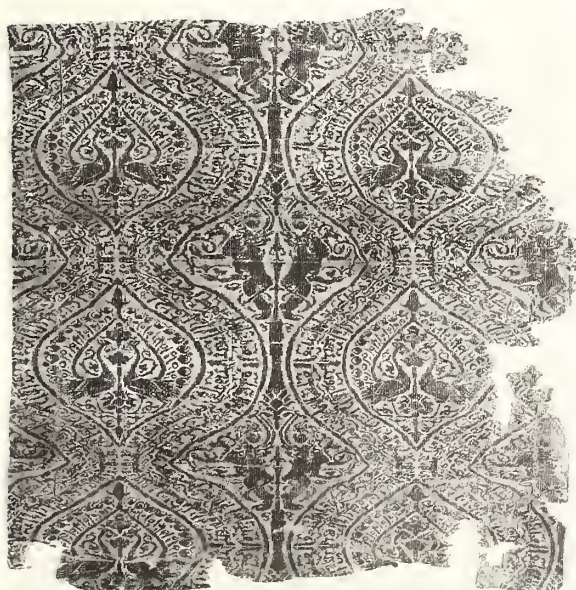


FIG. 8. Silk textile. CMA 39.506.



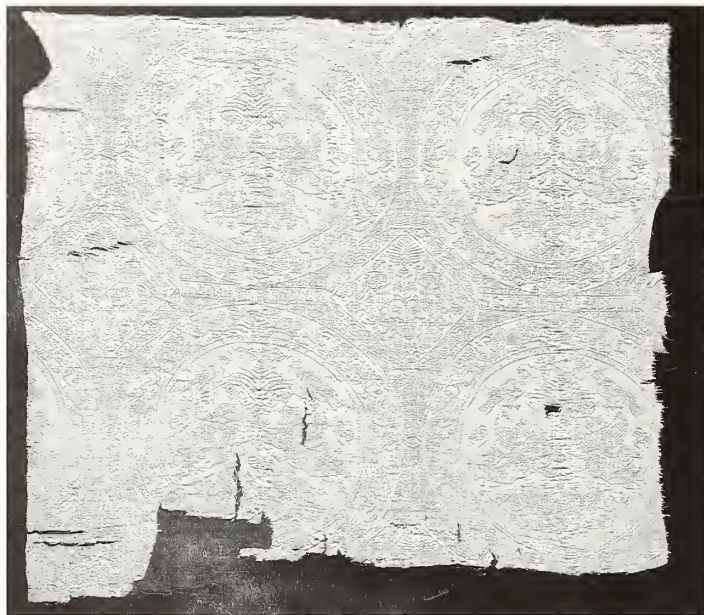


FIG. 9. Silk textile. CMA 50.84

	thick as others), single Binding: creamy white silk, poil Z Proportion: 4 main warps to 1 binding warp Step: 2 main warps Count: 64 main warps and 16 binding warps per cm		Translation: Everything that the Merciful One has revealed is to be relied upon.
		(6)	
		<i>Accession No.</i>	CMA 68.221 (Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund)
		<i>Size</i>	Warp: 50.8 cm (20"); weft: 71.1 cm (28")
		<i>Publication</i>	<i>CMA Bulletin</i> 56, no. 6 (June 1969), "Annual Report for 1968," illus. (detail) 225
		<i>Warp</i>	Main: golden brown silk, poil Z (slight twist), single Binding: golden brown silk, poil Z (slight twist) Proportion: 4 main warps to 1 binding warp Step: 2 main warps Count: 72 main warps and 18 binding warps per cm
<i>Weft</i>	Ground: creamy white silk, poil Z (slight twist) Pattern: creamy white silk, poil Z (slight twist) some three times as thick as ground weft Pass: 1 ground and 1 pattern weft Step: 1 pass Count: 26 passes per cm (52 wefts per cm)	<i>Weft</i>	Ground: golden brown silk, poil Z (slight twist) Pattern: dark blue (color uneven, sometimes turned to tan) silk, poil Z (slight twist) Pass: 1 ground and 1 pattern weft Step: 1 pass Count: 32 passes per cm
<i>Weave</i>	Lampas Ground: tabby binding of ground wefts by main warps Pattern: tabby binding of pattern wefts by binding warps Selvage: left side; at outer edge all wefts turn around 4 silk cords, each formed by bundles of warps, each poil Z and plied S (twists are very slight); selvage off-center to vertical of design	<i>Weave</i>	Lampas Ground: 3/1 broken twill binding of ground wefts by main warps
<i>Inscription</i>	Location: small band between large circles, repeated in mirror reverse Script: floriated Kufic Type: pious phrase Text:  كل ما بذره الرحمن لمعول		



FIG. 10. Silk textile (detail). CMA 68.221.

Pattern: tabby binding of pattern wefts by binding warps  
Selvage: none preserved

*Inscription* Location: small band between large circles, repeated in mirror reverse  
Script: floriated Kufic  
Type: pious phrase  
Text:

كل ما بذرہ الرحمن لمعول

Translation: Everything that the Merciful One has revealed is to be relied upon.

(7)

*Accession No.* CMA88.98 (Leonard C. Hanna, Jr., Fund)

*Size* Warp: 136.7 cm (53 $\frac{3}{8}$ ""); weft: 79 cm (31 $\frac{1}{8}$ "")

*Publication* Paris, 1961, no. 874, pl. XCIX; *CMA Bulletin* 76, no. 2 (Feb. 1989) "Year in Review for 1988," 74, no. 195, illus. (detail) 51

*Warp* Main: tan silk, poil Z, single  
Binding: tan silk, poil Z  
Proportion: 2 main warps to 1 binding warp

Step: 4 main warps  
Count: 52 main warps and 26 binding warps per cm

*Weft* Ground: tan silk, tram  
Pattern: brown silk, poil S, 2-ply S  
Pass: 1 ground and 1 pattern weft  
Step: 3 passes  
Count: 40 passes per cm

*Weave* Lampas  
Ground: 1/3 twill Z binding of ground wefts by main warps  
Pattern: 1/2 twill Z binding of pattern wefts by binding warps  
Selvage: wefts turn around outermost warp which is 2-ply S

*Inscription* Location: A) 2-line band running vertically behind horse; B) 2-word cartouche on forearm of rider

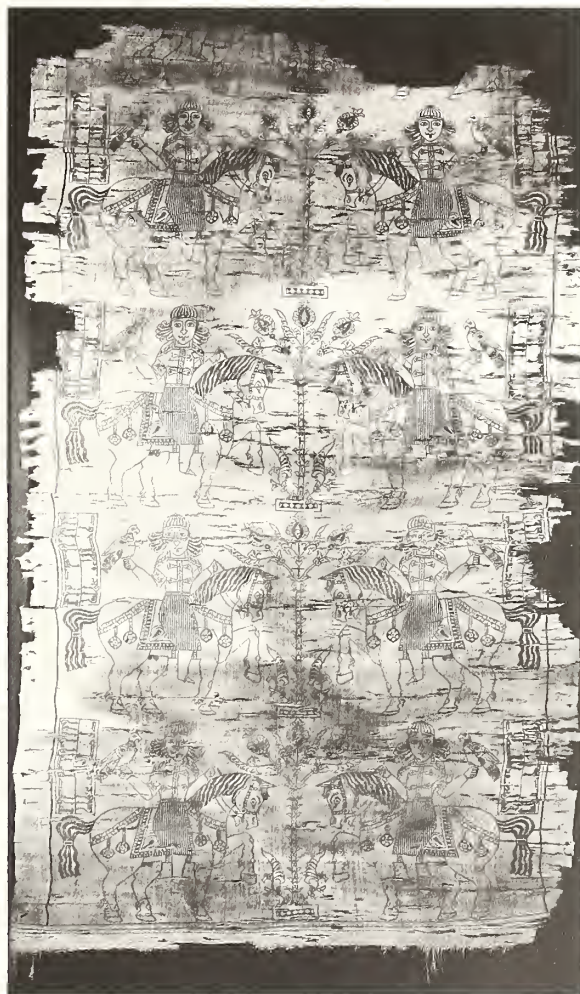


FIG. 11. Silk panel. CMA 88.98.



Script: simple Kufic

Type: A) couplet from the *Diwan* of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭamlib; B) pious ejaculation

Text:

(A) الهی انت ذو فضل ومن وانی |  
 نو خطایا فاعف عنی یا هو  
 (B) یا غافر

Translation: A) My God, You are the possessor of excellence and grace and I / am the possessor of sins, so forgive me, O He!

B) O Pardoner!

(8)

*Accession No.* CMA 82.281 (Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund)

*Size* Warp: 26.5 cm (10 $\frac{1}{2}$ "); weft: 100.5 cm. (39 $\frac{1}{2}$ "), as mounted

*Other pieces* CMA, no. 49.165; Abegg, no. 1098; Detroit, no. 40.139; New Haven, no. 1939-633 a and b.

*Publication* Unpublished, but other pieces published in: *Survey*, no. 49, pp. 2020, 2021 and 2040, fig. 654; Ackerman, 1940, no. 10, Gallery XIV, p. 453; Adèle Coulin Weibel, "A Persian Satin of the Seljuk Period," *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 20 (Jan. 1941): 34-35; Weibel, 1944, no. 53, p. 8, pl. 16; Pope, 1945, no. 107, pl. 71;

Dorothy C. Shepherd, "Two Seljuk Silks from Raiy," *CMA Bulletin* 26, no. 10 (Jan. 1950), 16-17; Weibel, 1952, no. 117, p. 114; *CMA Handbook* (1958), no. 680; Heinrich J. Schmidt, *Alle Seidenstoffe* (Braunschweig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1958), 117, fig. 83; Lemberg, 1973, I, no. 1098.

*Warp*

Main: white silk, poil Z, single

Binding: white silk, poil Z

Proportion: 4 main warps to 1 binding warp

Step: 4 main warps

Count: 104 main warps and 26 binding warps per cm

*Weft*

Ground: white silk, poil Z (slight twist)

Pattern: A) light brown silk, poil Z (slight twist), brocaded

B) light blue (originally deep blue) silk, poil S (slight twist), sometimes brocaded

Pass: 1 ground and 1 pattern weft

Step: 1 pass

Count: 30 passes per cm

*Weave*

Lampas, brocaded; and compound tabby (used in starting edge)

Ground: 3/1 broken twill of ground wefts by main warps; very loose weave

Pattern: tabby binding of pattern wefts by binding warps; blue pattern wefts are brocaded except for band of blue wefts forming tops and bottoms of octagons that extend from selvage to selvage. On the reverse side where the two colors meet, the brocading wefts overlap, one color usually alternating with the other, before



FIG. 12. Silk textile, CMA 82.281.

looping back around the binding warps. Selvage: ca. 1.5 cm wide; selvage border on face consists of pattern weave with blue pattern wefts interrupted by two thin lines of main warps and ground wefts woven in 3/1 broken twill; at the outer edge, all wefts turn around 3 silk cords consisting of several warps, each poil S, plied Z

Starting edge: The outermost fringe of warps is followed by a band, ca. 2.5 cm wide, of white main warps and ground wefts forming a 1/3 broken twill. The wefts are very loosely beaten in. This is followed by 7 mm of compound tabby weave with blue wefts on the face; the band is articulated by 2 thin stripes with white wefts on the face.

The design is oriented at right angles to the warp.

*Inscription* Location: around the edge of an octagon, repeated in mirror reverse  
Script: simple Kufic  
Type: pious phrase  
Text:

انى لاعلم والليل جنان ان الجنة فى ارجا ضفافه

Translation: I know full well that even though night is darkness, Paradise lies on its outer edges.

(9)

*Accession No.* CMA 66.134 (Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Werner Abegg)

*Size* Warp: 49.8 cm (19 $\frac{5}{8}$ "); weft: 68.9 cm (27 $\frac{1}{2}$ ")

*Other pieces* Abegg, no. 1103; New York

*Publication* Shepherd, 1974, fig. 54 A–D, and p. 19; other pieces published in: Wiet, *Soieries*, no. XVII, pl. XIX; Lemberg, 1973, I, no. 1103; Vial, 1973, 64; Shepherd, 1975, 184

*Warp* Main: white silk, poil Z (slight twist), single  
Binding: white silk, poil Z (slight twist)  
Proportion: 4 main warps to 1 binding warp  
Step: 4 main warps  
Count: 72 main warps and 18 binding warps per cm

*Weft* Ground: white silk, tram  
Pattern: A) dark brown silk, tram, 3–4 times as thick as ground weft  
B) white silk, tram (carried only on reverse)  
Pass: 1 ground and 2 pattern wefts  
Step: 1 pass  
Count: 28 passes per cm

*Weave* Lampas  
Ground: 3/1 broken twill binding of ground wefts by main warps; very loose ground weave  
Pattern: tabby binding of pattern wefts by binding warps; white pattern wefts are bound by binding warps throughout the reverse side of the textile  
Selvage: none preserved

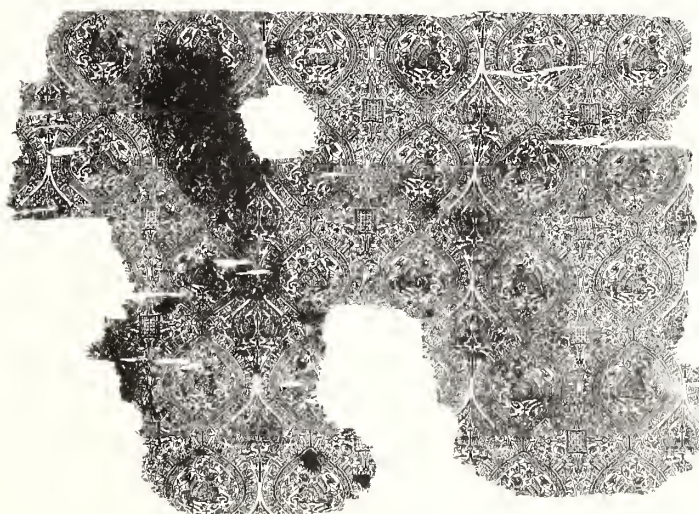


FIG. 13. Silk textile. CMA 66.134.



*Inscription* Location: running wavy band outlining  
ogival medallions, repeated in mirror  
reverse  
Script: floriated Kufic  
Type: couplet of Ka'b ibn Zuhayr  
Text:

كل ابن انثى وان طالت سلامته |  
يوما على آلة حدبا محمول

Translation: Every son of woman, even  
though his well-being may have lasted  
long, / One day is carried off on a bier.

### (10)

*Accession No.* CMA 53.331 (Purchase from the J. H.  
Wade Fund)

*Size* Warp: 35.3 cm (13<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub>""); weft: 25 cm  
(9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>"")

*Other pieces* Washington, D.C., no. 3.202

*Publication* CMA Handbook (1958), no. 681; Shep-  
herd, 1975, 184–85, fig. 6; other pieces



FIG. 14. Silk textile. CMA 53.331.

published in London, 1931, no. 38j, p.  
27; Reath, 1937, no. 69, p. 114, pl. 69;  
*Survey*, vol. 3, no. 53, pp. 2022 and 2041,  
and vol. 6, pl. 993 B; Weibel, 1944, no. 49,  
p. 7, pl. 13

*Warp* Main: blue (unevenly faded from dark  
blue to almost white) silk, poil Z, single  
Binding: tan silk, poil Z  
Proportion: 4 main warps to 1 binding  
warp  
Step: 4 main warps  
Count: 72 main warps and 18 binding  
warps per cm

*Weft* Ground: blue silk, tram  
Pattern: A) ivory silk, tram  
B) dark blue silk, tram (brocaded)  
C) tan (originally pink?) silk, tram (bro-  
caded)  
Pass: 1 ground and 3 pattern wefts  
Step: 1 pass  
Count: 26–28 passes per cm

*Weave* Lampas, brocaded  
Ground: 3/1 broken twill binding of  
ground wefts by main warps; loose weave  
Pattern: 1/2 twill Z binding of pattern  
wefts by binding warps; on the reverse the  
brocading wefts turn around binding  
warps  
Selvage: none preserved

*Inscription* Location: A) vertical band; B) horizontal  
cartouche  
Script: A) Kufic with interlaced stems; B)  
simple Kufic  
Type: A) couplet composed by al-Mu-  
tanabbī during his sojourn in Egypt from  
957 to 962 in praise of the Ikshidid ruler  
Kāfūr; B) pious phrase  
Text:

(A) ايا اسدا فى جسمه روح ضيغم |  
وكم اسدا [ا] اروا [ح] هن كلاب  
(B) انى اعتقدت بوعيدك وعدك |  
وارحب احسانك [وقض] لك

Translation: A) Lo, the lion in whose  
body dwells a leonine spirit; / But how  
many lions have the spirit of dogs? \*  
B) I believe in Your threats and Your

\*Identified by Dr. Irfan Shahid of Georgetown University; it  
can be found in Fr. Dieterici, *Mutanabbīi Carmina cum Com-  
mentario Wahidīi* (Berlin, 1861), 685, and Naṣīf al-Yāzījī, *al-  
‘Arf al-Ṭayyib fī Sharḥ Dīwān Abī Ḥ-L-Ṭayyib* (Beirut, 1964), 2:356.

justice / And Your most ample well-doing  
and grace.

(11)

**Accession No.** CMA 54.780 (Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund)

**Size** Warp: 209.5 cm (82¾"); weft: 80 cm (31½")

**Publication** *CMA Handbook* (1958), no. 676; Paris, 1961, no. 869, p. 162; Dorothy G. Shepherd, "A Pall from the Tomb of 'Ali ibn Muhammad," *CMA Bulletin* 49, no. 4

(April 1962), 72-79; *CMA Handbook* (1969), 215; Shepherd, 1974, fig. 26 and p. 20; Shepherd, 1975, 182; *CMA Handbook* (1978), 272; Y. H. Safadi, *Islamic Calligraphy* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), illus. p. 118, no. 130; Kax A. Wilson, *A History of Textiles* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1979), illus. pl. 30; Islam Centennial Fourteen, *Patterns and Precision, The Arts and Sciences of Islam* (The National Committee to Honor the Fourteenth Centennial of Islam, Inc., 1982), illus. p. 36; Johannes Pedersen, *The Arabic Book* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pl. 4, fig. 8

**Warp** Main: tan silk, thin, poil Z (slight twist)  
Binding: tan silk, thin, slightly poil Z (slight twist)  
Proportion: 3 main warps to 1 binding warp  
Step: 3 main warps  
Count: 48 main warps and 16 binding warps per cm

**Weft** A: light tan (originally coral) silk, poil S, 3 ply Z  
B: dark brown silk, poil S, 3 ply Z  
Pass: 1 tan and 1 brown weft  
Step: 1 pass  
Count: 20 passes per cm

**Weave** Compound tabby; warps are very thin compared to the plied wefts  
Selvage: at edges, wefts loop back around outer warps, some of which are now missing; the warps at curved contours appear to have been cut after weaving

**Inscription** Location: A) semi-circle around face; B) two lines across face; C) circle over heart; D) vertical band down center; E) two lines vertically down left; F) two lines vertically down right; G-H) two vertical lines at bottom on left and right  
Script: simple Kufic  
Type: A) prayer for named individual; B-H) prayers for mercy  
Text:

مغفرة من الرحمن الرحيم للعبد العاصي على  
بن محمد بن شهرزاد بن راستويه الاصبهاني  
(B) اللهم بيض وجهي يوم تسود  
فيه الوجوه ولعلني تجلني يوم [المعاد]  
(C) اللهم ثبت قلبي على دينك بحق محمد وآله  
(D) اللهم اني اودعتك بقلبي هذا الاقرار بك وبالنبي  
محمد صلى الله عليه وآله والاائمة عليهم



FIG. 15. Silk tomb cover. CMA 54.780.



السلام وانت خير مستودع تفرد على وقت  
سؤال منكرو ونكير برحمتك يا ارحم الراحمين  
(E) اللهم اعطني كتابي بيمينى |  
وحاسبني حسابا يسيرا  
(F) اللهم لا تعطني كتابي بشمالى |  
ولا تجعلها مغلوله الى عنقى  
(G) اللهم ثبت قدمى على الصراط  
(H) يوم تزل فيه الاقدام

Translation: A) Forgiveness from the Merciful, the Compassionate to the disobedient servant, 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Shahrāzād ibn Rāstawayh al-Īshāhānī  
B) O God, whiten my face on the day when faces turn black / and perhaps You will honor me on the day of return  
C) O God, fix my heart firmly in Your religion through Muḥammad and his family  
D) O God, I have lodged in my heart this confession of You and the Prophet Muḥammad, may God bless him and his family, and the imams, upon them be peace, for You are the best and the only one to be relied upon at the time of the questioning by Munkar and Nakir, with Your mercy, O most merciful of the Merciful  
E) O God, give me my book in my right hand and give me an easy reckoning  
F) O God, do not give me my book in my left hand and do not cause it to be chained around my neck  
G) O God, fix my feet firmly on the right path  
H) on the day when all other feet slip

(12)

Accession No. CMA TR15730/8

Size Warp: 16.2 cm (6 $\frac{3}{8}$ "); weft: 16 cm (6 $\frac{1}{4}$ ")

Other pieces Abegg, no. 1522

Publication Shepherd, 1974, 51–57; Shepherd, 1975, 179 and 184; other pieces published in: Lemberg, 1973, no. 1152; Vial, 1973, 65, 90–102; Shepherd, 1975, 178–80, 184

Warp Main: white silk, poil Z, (slight twist)  
Binding: white silk, poil Z (slight twist)  
Proportion: 2 main warps to 1 binding warp



FIG. 16. Silk textile. CMA TR15370/8.

Step: 2 main warps  
Count: 80 main warps and 40 binding warps per cm

Weft A: white silk, poil Z (slight twist)  
B: pale pink silk, poil Z (slight twist)  
C: blue silk, poil Z (slight twist)  
D: charcoal brown silk, poil Z (slight twist)  
Pass: 3 wefts  
Step: usually 2 (occasionally 1) passes  
Count: ca. 60 passes per cm

Weave 1/3 compound twill, S; numerous flaws  
Selvage: none preserved

Inscription Location: A) around edge of circle, in mirror reverse; B) outer circle; C) across front of eagle  
Script: simple Kufic  
Type: A) good wishes for named individual; B) good wishes; C) pious ejaculation  
Text:

(A) عز واقبال للصاحب الرئيس  
الامير الاجل حرس الله ساحته (?)  
(B) الدولة.. والنعمه  
(C) الملك لله وحده

Translation: A) Glory and prosperity to the minister, the chief / the most illustrious amir, may God guard his courtyard [?]  
B) Good fortune . . . ease  
C) Dominion belongs to God alone



FIG. 17. Silk textile. CMA 68.227.

## (13)

**Accession No.** CMA 68.227 (Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund)

**Size** Warp: 23.5 cm (9¼"); weft: 21 cm (8¼")

**Publication** Shepherd, 1974, 48–49, fig. 41, 119

**Warp** Main: brown silk, poil Z, unevenly spun, single  
Binding: brown silk, poil Z  
Proportion: 4 main warps to 1 binding warp  
Step: 4 main warps  
Count: 56 main warps and 14 binding warps per cm

**Weft** Ground: brown silk, tram  
Pattern: tan silk, tram  
Pass: 1 ground and 1 pattern weft  
Step: 2 passes  
Count: 16 passes per cm

**Weave** Lampas  
Ground: ground wefts are bound by main warps in both tabby and 3/1 broken twill bindings. The binding shifts from tabby to broken twill off and on throughout the textile.

Pattern: tabby binding of pattern wefts by binding warps  
Selvage: none preserved

**Inscription** Location: small circle between larger ones  
Script: simple Kufic  
Type: good wishes for named individual  
Text:

عز واقبال للصاحب ابى سعيد يحيى بن زياد

Translation: Glory and prosperity to the minister Abū Saʿīd Yahyā ibn Ziyād.

## (14)

**Accession No.** CMA 66.23 (Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund)

**Size** Warp: 47.7 cm (18¾"); weft: 63.5 cm (25")

**Other pieces** Abegg, no. 79

**Publication** CMA Bulletin 53, no. 7 (Sept. 1966), "Golden Anniversary Acquisitions," cat. no. 130, p. 284, illus. p. 189; Shepherd, 1974, fig. 55a and p. 16; other piece published in Wiet, *Soieries*, 72–78, pls. XV and XXIV; Lemberg, 1973, no. 79.

**Warp** Main: white silk, poil Z (slight twist)  
Binding: white silk, poil Z (slight twist)  
Proportion: 1 main warp to 1 binding warp  
Step: 1 main warp  
Count: 24 main and 24 binding warps per cm

**Weft** Ground: white silk, tram  
Pattern: dark brown silk, each 2 strands slightly poil Z and plied Z (twice as thick as ground weft)  
Pass: 1 ground and 1 pattern weft  
Step: 1 pass  
Count: 43 passes per cm

**Weave** Lampas  
Ground: tabby binding of ground wefts by main warps. Weave very loose, binding warps lie beside main warps  
Pattern: tabby binding of pattern wefts by binding warps  
Starting edge: tabby weave of paired warps (1 main and 1 binding) and white ground weft  
Selvage: none preserved





FIG. 18. Silk textile. CMA 66.23.

<i>Inscription</i>	<p>Location: around circle, in mirror reverse          Script: floriated Kufic          Type: good wishes for named individual          Text:</p>	<i>Size</i>	Warp: 60.3 cm (23¾"); weft: 57.2 cm (22½")
	<p>مبارك الامير الاجل ركن الدنيا والدين ابو          المظفر اياد بن سيهل بن شيردیل (?) الدهلي          متعه الله به</p>	<i>Publication</i>	<p>Wiet, <i>Soieries</i>, pl. XVIII, no. XVI, pp. 83–84; D. G. Shepherd, "Iran between East and West," in <i>East-West in Art</i>, ed. Theodore Bowie (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), illus. p. 101, no. 158; <i>CMA Bulletin</i> 56, no. 1 (Jan. 1969), "Year in Review for 1968," listed 48, illus. 7; <i>CMA Handbook</i> (1978), 273.</p>
	<p>Translation: Blessing for the illustrious amir, Rukn al-Dunyā wa'l-Dīn Abū'l-Muẓaffar Iyād ibn Suhayl ibn Shīrdīl al-Duhulī [?], may God cause him to enjoy it</p>	<i>Warp</i>	<p>Main: white silk, poil Z (slight twist)          Binding: white silk, poil Z (slight twist)          Proportion: 2 main warps to 1 binding warp          Step: 2 main warps          Count: 44 main and 22 binding warps per cm</p>
(15)			
<i>Accession No.</i>	CMA 68.73 (Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mallon)	<i>Weft</i>	Ground: white silk, poil Z (very slight twist)



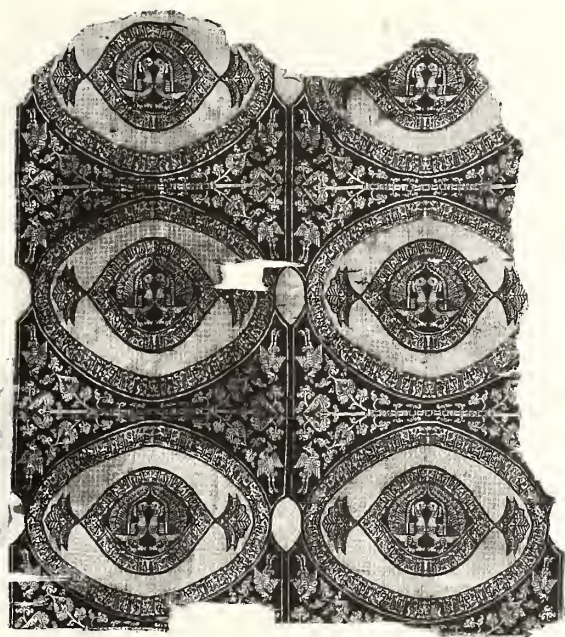


FIG. 19. Silk textile. CMA 68.73.

Pattern: charcoal brown silk, poil S (very slight twist)

Pass: 1 ground and 1 pattern weft

Step: 2 passes

Count: 46 passes per cm

#### Weave

Lampas (with areas of compound weave)  
Ground: tabby binding of ground wefts by main warps; binding warps often lie beside main warps; compound tabby weave used for tiny circles articulating the ground of the ovals; numerous flaws  
Pattern: tabby binding of pattern wefts by binding warps

Starting edge: tabby binding of ground wefts by all warps (each binding warp is carried with a main warp as a paired warp). At irregular intervals blue silk fibers are carried with a white main warp through the starting edge and from .6 to 3.4 cm into the design.

Selvage: the design on both sides ends exactly down the dividing band that separates the vertical rows of ovals. The brown pattern wefts loop back at the outer edge of the design. Then follows a plain white section: that on the right side is ca. 2.3 cm to the selvage edge, that on the left side is more than 5 cm (the left outer edge is missing). The right selvage edge is completed by one white silk cord, plied Z, around which white ground wefts turn.

#### Inscription

Location: A) around outer oval, in mirror reverse; B) around inner oval, in mirror reverse

Script: floriated Kufic

Type: A) couplet from unidentified source B) pious phrase, paraphrase of Koran

Text:

(A) حسنا ضافية بيضا صافية كان رونقها في  
صارم ذكر يزين اطرافها طرز كما  
رقت على المجرة طرق الانجم الزهر  
(B) ما الفجر الا اهل العلم انهم على الهدى  
لن استهدى ادلا

Translation: A) Beautiful, ample, white and pure, whose splendor is as if [derived] from that of a tempered blade. Embroideries embellish its edges, as the paths of the brilliant stars have been traced on the Milky Way.

B) Only people of knowledge possess excellence. They are guides to the way for those who seek guidance.

#### (16)

Accession No. CMA 85.59 (Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund)

#### Size

Sleeve edge to sleeve edge: 176 cm (69 1/2");  
shoulder to hem: 127 cm (50")

#### Publication

Shepherd, 1974, 20, 23, and 76, fig. 20;  
*CMA Bulletin* 73, no. 2 (Feb. 1986), "Year in Review for 1985," no. 161, p. 69, illus. p. 41

#### Warp

Main: white silk, poil Z, single  
Binding: white silk, poil Z, single  
Proportion: 2 main warps to 1 binding warp  
Step: 3 main warps  
Count: 40 main and 20 binding warps per cm

#### Weft

Ground: white silk, poil Z, 2 ply S (slight twist and slight ply)  
Pattern: dark brown silk, tram  
Pass: 1 ground and 1 pattern weft  
Step: 2 passes  
Count: 27 passes per cm

#### Weave

Lampas  
Ground: 3/1 twill Z, binding of ground wefts by main warps





FIG. 20. Silk caftan. CMA 85.59.

Pattern: 1/2 twill Z, binding of pattern wefts by binding warps

Selvage: border ca. 6 cm of ground weave on face; all wefts turn around outer warp which is a little denser than other warps

#### Inscription

Location: A) collar; B–C) small bands around top of sleeve; (D) large middle band on sleeves between B) and C); E) diagonal bands on sleeves; F) five lines on back; two large vertical lines on right and left (1–2) with two smaller lines (3–4) on left and right and one (5) smaller line below

Script: simple Kufic

Type: A) plea for God's mercy on anonymous owner; Koranic verse; B–C) plea for God's mercy, paraphrase of Koranic verse; D) good wishes; E) good wishes; F) good wishes to named individual; signature

Text:

يا رحمن يا لطيف ارحم عبدك الضعيف (A)

يا من اقرب الى من حبل الوريد ارحمني  
(B) اعوذ بوجهك الكريم من شر الدنيا والآخرة  
ومن شر الاوجاع كلها ومن شر كل ذابة انت آ  
(C) خذ بناصيتها ان ربي على صراط مستقيم  
واعوذ بك من كل شر وخزي الدنيا وعذاب الآخرة  
(D) اليمن والاقبال والدولة والسرور والسعادة  
والكرامة  
(E) يا نو [sic] الاجلال والاكرام أجرنى من  
السيئات وارفع درجتى برضيك واجعلنى سعيدا  
(F1) الهى أمدد لى فى عمري  
(F2) الهى اعصمنى من المعاصى  
(F3) استعمال ابو [sic] محمد زياد  
(F4) ابن حمدان الفضلى  
(F5) عمل احمد ... الديلمى

Translation: A) O Merciful One, O Benevolent One, have mercy on Your weak servant. O You who are closer to me than my jugular vein [Koran 50:15], have mercy on Me.

B) I seek refuge in Your magnanimous countenance from the evil of this world and the next, from the evil of all pains, and from the evil of every creeping thing whose forelock You seize. Truly my Lord is on a straight path [paraphrase of Koran 11:59].

C) And I seek refuge in You from every evil and shame of this world and from the punishment of the next.

D) Good fortune, prosperity, dominion, joy, felicity, and honor

E) O You who possess majesty and who bestow honor, grant me asylum from evil things, exalt my station by Your pleasure, and make me fortunate!

F) 1) My God, help me in my life

2) My God, preserve me from sin

3) For the use of Abū Muḥammad Ziyād

4) ibn Ḥamdān al-Faḍlī

5) Work of Aḥmad . . . al-Daylamī

Step: 2 passes

Count: 17 passes per cm

#### Weave

Lampas

Ground: 3/1 twill Z, binding of ground wefts by main warps; very loose weave

Pattern: 1/2 twill S, binding of pattern wefts by binding warps; wefts beaten in very loosely

Selva: none preserved

#### Inscription

Location: cartouche with four lines

Script: simple Kufic

Type: good wishes to named individual; date, place

Text:

العز والاقبال للامير الاجل | ابو الرئيس (?)

خلف (?) بن منصور الطواغى

اطال الله بقاء سنة | ثلث وماتين بمدينة بغداد

Translation: Glory and prosperity to the most exalted amir Abū'l-Ra'īs [?] Khalaf [?] ibn Maṣṣūr al-Ṭawāghī [?] may God prolong his existence. In the year three and [tw]o hundred in the city of Baghdād.

(17)

*Accession No.* CMA 82.23 (Gift of The Junior Council of The Cleveland Museum of Art)

*Size* Warp: 113.7 cm (44¾"); weft: 86.7 cm (34¾")

*Publication* Unpublished

*Warp* Main: white silk, poil Z, 2 ply Z (but plied so slightly as to appear as two ends used as a single warp)  
Binding: white silk, poil Z, 2 ply Z (plied very slightly)  
Proportion: 2 main warps to 1 binding warp  
Step: 4 main warps  
Count: 50 main and 25 binding warps per cm

*Weft* Ground: white silk, poil Z (slight twist)  
Pattern: A) yellow silk, poil Z, 2 ply Z (slight twist and slight ply); B) charcoal gray, poil Z, 2 ply Z (slight twist and slight ply); C) dark brown, poil Z, 2 ply Z (slight twist and slight ply); D) salmon pink, poil Z, 2 ply Z (slight twist and slight ply); E) dull yellow-green, poil Z, 2 ply Z (slight twist and slight ply)  
Pass: 1 ground and 1 pattern weft



FIG. 21. Front of silk tunic. CMA 82.23.





for Oleg Grabar, on the occasion of his retirement from teaching,  
these leaves dropped from the bouquet of his Festschrift

## THE ILLUSTRATED MANUSCRIPTS OF FIRDAUSĪ'S *SHĀHNĀMA* COMMISSIONED BY PRINCES OF THE HOUSE OF TĪMŪR

By ELEANOR SIMS

### *Introduction*

A TIMURID RENAISSANCE OF SORTS HAS FOLLOWED THE exhibition "Timur and the Princely Vision," mounted in Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles in 1989. Publications accompanied the exhibition;<sup>1</sup> scholarly symposia, along with public lectures and workshops, were arranged to coincide with its display; and still more recent scholarly events, exhibitions, and publications have continued to focus attention on the refined and exquisite arts of this period in the Eastern Islamic world.<sup>2</sup> The exhibition made possible the staggering display of Timurid arts seldom seen together since their creation in the fifteenth century; along with subsequent events it provided an opportunity to reassess some of the primary documents of Timurid material culture, especially the arts of the book. A case in point is the three illustrated copies of Firdausī's *Shāhnāma*—the epic verse-composition in which Iran's ancient history and national values<sup>3</sup> are set forth in the "new" Persian of the Islamic period—that were commissioned by three of the bibliophile sons of Shāh Rukh.

The most celebrated of these manuscripts (and since 1978 the most inaccessible, since it is in the Gulistan Palace Library in Tehran) was made for Bāysunghur (799/1397–837/1433) and completed in Herat in 833/1430 (figs. 5, 9, 14, 16).<sup>4</sup> Almost as celebrated is the volume presumably made for Muḥammad Jūkī (804/1402–848/1444–45) (figs. 4, 7, 11, 15); it is undated and lacking its colophon, although internal evidence—the prince's name and titles on a banner depicted on folio 296r—connects it with him, and the manuscript is usually assigned to Herat about a decade later than Bāysunghur's. Owned by the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, it has been on loan to the British Library in London for many years.<sup>5</sup> The third manuscript, in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, is also undated, but it contains an illuminated dedication to Ibrāhīm-Sultān (796/1394–838/1435) (figs. 1, 2, 3, 6, 10,

12) as well as a panegyric poem in Ibrāhīm's name; it is therefore always placed in Shiraz (where this prince was governor between 817/1414 and 838/1435) and usually dated between 1430 and 1435.<sup>6</sup>

Having studied all three manuscripts in 1971, I found myself struck anew by the differences among them when I reexamined them in 1978.<sup>7</sup> Recent opportunities to study two of these three manuscripts yet again have allowed a further consideration of all three, not only as they differ one from another but as, together, they stand apart from most of the other illustrated copies of Firdausī's *Shāhnāma* created in fifteenth-century Iran. The following essay reflecting on these three fascinating manuscripts seems an appropriate offering to Oleg Grabar, whose own writings have explored the use Islamic civilization has made of the cultures it came to replace and the manner in which it has imbued older forms with new meanings for its own new purposes.<sup>8</sup> There is a caveat: what follows is—in part—written in the spirit of the well-known *grabañ* tendency to hypothesize, and it should be read with Carl Sagan's dictum, "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence," in mind. Our field is still so sparsely studied, despite the dedication of Oleg and so many others, that it would not surprise me were new material, as it comes to light, to render some of this essay out of date.

### *Three Timurid Princely Shāhnāma Manuscripts and Their Patrons*

Bāysunghur, Muḥammad Jūkī, and Ibrāhīm, separated by no more than eight years of age, were given an education of great literacy. As adults, their lives were distinguished by personal literary and artistic accomplishments and patronage at a level in every way equal to that of their French contemporaries, especially Jean, Duc de Berri and René d'Anjou.<sup>9</sup> The Timurid brothers are known to have corresponded with one another



on literary matters such as whether Nizāmi's or Amīr Khusrau's *Khamsa* was the superior work.<sup>10</sup> Thus it would seem possible—although purely speculative—that on topics such as the illustrative programs in their respective *Shāhnāma* manuscripts they might also have exchanged ideas and discussed sources. In point of fact, the brothers' manuscripts appear to resemble one another only in the most general of characteristics: each uses the same fifteenth-century recension of the text,<sup>11</sup> each has been embellished with fine illumination, and each contains at least one picture that could be interpreted as a "portrait" of the prince who commissioned it. But the three volumes differ markedly in size and layout, in the organization of their illustrative programs, and in that aspect that first strikes the eye—the style and quality of their paintings. In the scope of illustrative programs, too, each volume differs from the others: Bāysunghur's has only twenty-one illustrations (always counting double-page compositions as one picture);<sup>12</sup> Muḥammad Jūkī's has thirty-one at present;<sup>13</sup> and Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān's has forty-seven.<sup>14</sup> Yet one of the usual characteristics of illustrated Persian manuscripts of Firdausī's text is that their illustrative programs are vast.<sup>15</sup> It is therefore all the more remarkable that, as they exist today, these three princely Timurid manuscripts contain altogether only ninety-nine pictures (Appendix A).

### *The Shāhnāma of Bāysunghur*

Bāysunghur's *Shāhnāma* was copied and illustrated in Herat, completed on 5 Junādā I 833/31 January 1430.<sup>16</sup> It is an unforgettably impressive volume. The folios are large, said to measure 38 x 26 centimeters;<sup>17</sup> and the text is written in six columns, a format more typical of fourteenth-century manuscripts and almost abandoned by this date.<sup>18</sup> A large and beautifully illuminated *shamsa* at the beginning of the volume reveals that it was prepared for Bāysunghur's library; and four additional pairs of illuminated pages are recorded,<sup>19</sup> one at the end of the volume. The majority of its twenty-one paintings are also large, many occupying nearly the entire folio or else making ample use of the margins. They are remarkable pictures for many reasons, not the least of which is the quality of the drawing, which avoids all prettiness, and the physical size and emotive amplitude of their figures. The palette is quite individual, as is often the case with

Bāysunghur's manuscripts. Overall, the tonality is deep, with rather strong contrasts of primary colors and frequent use of purple; many men have an unmistakable roux cast to beard and mustaches.

Three paintings in Bāysunghur's *Shāhnāma* have a direct connection with a large Jalayirid manuscript that survives only in about a dozen majestic folios preserved in an album (H. 2153) in the Topkapı Sarayı Library (fig. 13).<sup>20</sup> This manuscript is sometimes referred to as the "Shams al-Dīn" or the "Proto-Bāysunghur" *Shāhnāma*; one of its more plausible attributions is to the hand of the celebrated Shams al-Dīn, who worked for Uways I Jalāyir (which implies it was made in Tabriz between 757/1356 and 776/1374, perhaps around 1370).<sup>21</sup> The manuscript (or its fragmentary remains) might have fallen into Bāysunghur's possession when, as his father's trusted regent, he served as governor of Tabriz in 823/1420–824/1421.<sup>22</sup> Bāysunghur's "Farīdūn Nails Zaḥḥāk on Mount Damāvand" (fig. 14) is clearly based on the earlier picture (fig. 13), which, however, has been quite thoroughly repainted, so that only compositions, not details nor even format, can be usefully compared. It partakes of the mythical element of the *Shāhnāma*, illustrating a key, early triumph of the forces of light and good over darkness and evil in a composition of great power, which occurs again in the most ambitiously conceived princely manuscript of the next century, that of Shāh Ṭahmāsp Safavī.<sup>23</sup> Bāysunghur's "The Meeting of Zāl and Rūdāba" (p. 62) and "Isfandiyār's First Khvān" (p. 393) are also unmistakable "copies" of the earlier pictures.<sup>24</sup> In Bāysunghur's use of pictorial models associated with Shams al-Dīn—the painter recognized by sixteenth-century connoisseurs of painting as the immediate ancestor of the art of painting as it had been practiced for two centuries—as well as in the conscious archaism of the six-column text format, this bibliophile prince can be seen as aligning himself with past masters of the arts of the book.

All the pictures of Bāysunghur's *Shāhnāma* are remarkable for their sober avoidance of fantasy and imagination, a feature that sets them apart from virtually all other recorded copies of Firdausī's *Shāhnāma*—of any period. They depict, instead, the responsibilities and preoccupations of rulers or their regents and governors: the teaching of a people in their earliest years as a nation, the courting of princesses to ensure posterity, the education of heirs, the ordering of

battles against invaders and usurpers. No fewer than eight paintings illustrate episodes in one of the primary themes of Firdausī's poem: the epic conflict between Iran and Turan that stems from the murder of Īraj by his elder brothers. Firdausī's princes, as Bāysunghur had them illustrated, preside over the large organized hunts, called *bat-tues*, that attested to the princely prerogative and also provided food for the court; they conduct ceremonies of state mourning; they receive and encourage innovations such as chess, with its inherent formulas of strategy. Bāysunghur's concern to illustrate his copy of Firdausī's epic by choosing images of legitimacy and the continuity of princely government is, finally, underscored by what appears to be a unique double-page illuminated table of the *shāhs* of Iran, from Gayūmarth, the first king, to Yazdigird, each name written in white on a golden circle.<sup>25</sup>

### *The Shāhnāma of Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān*

Ibrāhīm's *Shāhnāma* was almost surely produced in Shiraz. It was, once, a handsome volume,

with folios measuring 28.5 x 19.9 centimeters and its text written in four columns. Today its paintings are damaged and have been removed from the body of the manuscript, which is in some textual disorder. It also lacks a colophon, so that the date at which it was completed must remain conjectural; Robinson's suggestion that it was Ibrāhīm's response to Bāysunghur's copy of 833/1430 (especially as it contains the Bāysunghurī preface) and that it was produced shortly thereafter still remains perfectly plausible.<sup>26</sup> In addition to its forty-seven illustrations, it is "sumptuously illuminated" in both the contemporary Herat and Shiraz manners, with three double-page ornamental compositions (fols. 16v–17r, 17v–18r, 237v–38r) and a single-page dedication to Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān (fol. 12r), as well as five pages of pen-and-gold drawings (fols. 2v–3r, 4v, 6v–7r) toward the beginning of the volume. Unfortunately, it is the most damaged of the three brothers' *Shāhnāma* manuscripts: whole areas of painting colored a particular shade of "Timurid green," compounded from copper carbonate,<sup>27</sup> have burned through the paper; its folios are loose and its pictures

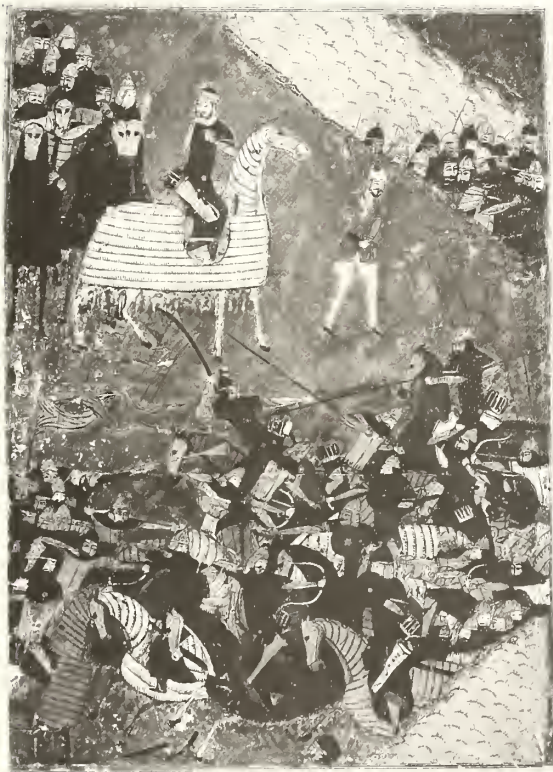


FIG. 1. "Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān Directs a Battle," *Shāhnāma*, 1430–35? Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ouseley Add. 176, fols. 6r–7v.



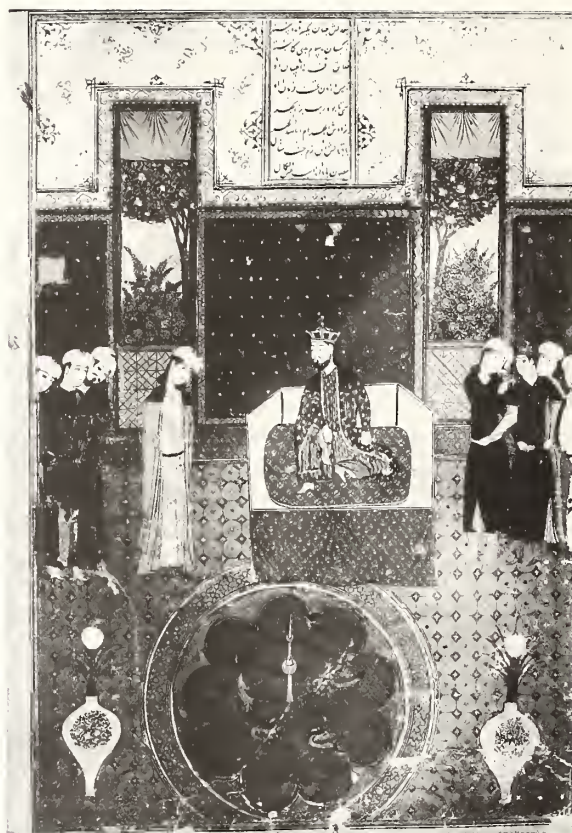


FIG. 2. "Ibrāhīm-Sultān Holds Court in a Palace; His Consort on a Balcony with Her Attendants," *Shāhnāma*, 1430–35? Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ouseley Add. 176, fols. 239v–240r.

removed and mounted separately; and many of its paintings have been extensively "restored" by repainting, so that the original appearance of many figures has been completely altered.

At first glance it also seems the most conventional of the three manuscripts: it contains the largest number of pictures of the three, and its illustrative program is the most traditional. In actual fact, Ibrāhīm's *Shāhnāma* lays great pictorial emphasis on the ancient Iranian themes of *bazm u razm*, hunting, feasting, and battle. Within the framework of the *Shāhnāma* episodes, twenty pictures depict bodily attack, whether full-scale battles or personal contests and duels; four are hunting scenes; and five depict royal audiences or other ceremonial occasions. Especially notable is the trio now placed at the beginning of the volume, three full-page double-page compositions, each celebrating one of these three princely occupations (fig. 1), in compositions larger and more elaborate than occur anywhere else in the manuscript.

I have suggested elsewhere that the practice of

honoring—or flattering—a Persian painter's princely patron by depicting signal events in his life in double-page compositions, other than when they function as double-page frontispieces, has its origin in Ibrāhīm's Shiraz painting atelier.<sup>28</sup> His *Shāhnāma* now appears to me to be the first essay in this new mode: the first three pairs of pictures (fols. 1v–4r, 2r–3v, and 6r–7v, in their present foliation) (fig. 1) show Ibrāhīm in each one of these princely activities in pictures built up by means of time-honored compositional formulas. The fourth pair (fols. 239v–240r) (fig. 2) is quite different. It is an almost genre-like picture, one half showing Ibrāhīm holding court, the other his consort in apparent conversation with a gardener; together they make up a picture so awkward and unresolved, as a composition, that when the two halves were first published, they were considered to be misbound in the manuscript.<sup>29</sup> Not only is this not so; but I would also suggest that the significance of this imperfectly conceived double-page picture—"portraits" setting the patron and his spouse in contemporary





FIG. 3. "Rustam Kicks Back Bahman's Rock," *Shāhnāma*, 1430–35? Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ouseley Add. 176, fol. 272v.

surroundings instead of formulaic pictures, something never before attempted in Timurid painting—quite overrides considerations of its pictorial quality.<sup>30</sup>

The next Shirazi stage in the development of the double-page nonfrontispiece picture appears no more than five years later, in Ibrāhīm's *Zafarnāma*, completed in 839/1436 (after his death on 4 Shawwāl 838/15 May 1435). This manuscript originally had thirteen double-page pictures out of a total of twenty-four compositions altogether. By the date of its completion Ibrāhīm-Sultān's artists had done much to overcome the problem of illustrating a subject with few (if any) pictorial antecedents in a pictorially unified composition convincingly spread across two facing pages of a manuscript.

While such later achievements, in the *Zafarnāma*, may be credited to Ibrāhīm's Shiraz atelier, many of the paintings produced there for his earlier *Shāhnāma* typify the simplest style of Shiraz painting of the third and fourth decade of the century.

Some of the earlier pictures in the ensemble, such as "The Court of Gayūmarth, the First King" (fol. 20r), give evidence of the survival of the quality of painting practiced in Shiraz in the time of Iskandar-Sultān (cousin to the sons of Shāh Rukh). This prince had governed in Fars two decades earlier, and some of the artists who had worked on the series of extremely fine manuscripts dedicated to him (dated between 813/1410 and 816/1413) almost certainly remained in Shiraz to join Ibrāhīm's atelier. At least half of his *Shāhnāma* pictures are not especially interesting in themselves; others, especially toward the end of the manuscript, make striking use of the entire page by "weaving" different zones of the picture around the text columns (fig. 3).<sup>31</sup> Many, however, are in the tradition of fourteenth-century Shiraz illustration, the picture "glued" firmly to the top or the bottom of the written surface, the horizontal margin sometimes "stepped" in alternation with lines of text.<sup>32</sup> Figures are quite large and few within a given picture. The same is true for landscape elements, except where they may be needed for visual narration; indeed, most paintings in this manuscript are devoid of the surface detail and elaboration of textures and colors that are so beguiling in Bāysunghur's manuscripts, for example, and in so many of the finest Herat-Timurid volumes. The palette is limited to the more usual Shirazi primary colors: grayed tones of pink, lavender, or green for the high rounded hill of many backgrounds; and towards the end of the volume a brilliant medium blue, used for sky and background both. In recompense, certain pictures convey dramatic events with forceful, if stripped-down, dramatic effect; some convey a pictorial drama by the movement of foliage, which has a lunatic but compelling quality.

Stylistic matters, however, are not the only way to judge the significance of a manuscript, and in this case the themes Ibrāhīm appears to have considered important are equally interesting. As in his illustrated *Zafarnāma*, family connections are also stressed in his earlier *Shāhnāma*: eight pictures focus on primary figures related by blood, in addition to the four double-page pictures, especially the last, in which he and his consort figure. This amounts to over a quarter of the manuscript's program. The deeds of heroes, as opposed to kings, also receive great pictorial emphasis in his *Shāhnāma*: twenty-four pictures, or over half of the program. By contrast, almost



entirely absent from Ibrāhīm's *Shāhnāma* are pictures illustrating princely responsibilities and legitimate government, themes that had so pre-occupied Bāysunghur in the illustration of his own manuscript.

### *The Shāhnāma of Muḥammad Jūkī*

Almost all of the thirty-one paintings in Muḥammad Jūkī's *Shāhnāma* are quite Herati in their compositional models, styles of drawing, techniques and manners of applying color and building up picture surfaces. Muḥammad Jūkī's manuscript is midway between those of his brothers in size, measuring 33.6 x 22.9 centimeters. Like Ibrāhīm's, its text is written in four columns; unlike Ibrāhīm's and Bāysunghur's, it is not so richly illuminated, having only two *sarlauhs* (on fol. 3v, at the beginning of the Bāysunghurī preface, and on fol. 244v, at the beginning of the reign of Luhrāsp) and no double-page ornamental compositions. The manuscript was taken to India by the early sixteenth century, for the gilded surface of folio 3r<sup>33</sup> bears the seals of Mughal emperors from Bābur to Aurangzīb (with the exception of Akbar) along with Mughal librarians' inventory notes. It appears to have passed consecutively into the hands of the Mahrattas, then the Nawabs of Oudh, one of whom gave it to the first Marquis Hastings in 1818, who gave it to his military secretary Charles Joseph Doyle in 1821, who in 1834 presented it to the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

It was thus presumably also in India that the manuscript fell into textual disorder and was remargined; clearly, it was in India that some of the *ʿunwāns* were further ornamented and the chapter headings rewritten and that two paintings were touched up in the Mughal manner (fols. 430v and 531r). It has no colophon, which accounts for mild differences of opinion as to its date and patron, although its Herati provenance at some point toward the middle of the century has never been in doubt.<sup>34</sup> It is impossible to say whether the absence of a colophon indicates that the manuscript was never completed or, instead, that it was damaged after completion. Towards the end of the manuscript the *ʿunwāns* are not filled in, and Robinson's analysis of lacunae early in the volume and of differences in paper color suggests that it may originally have been intended to have as many as twelve or thirteen more

illustrations, which in turn suggests that it was never finished. The text is still in disorder, even after modern rebinding.<sup>35</sup>

Such aspects of the physical condition of Muḥammad Jūkī's *Shāhnāma* do not in the least affect the quality that has continually called forth comment: the romantic and unearthly fantasy of its landscapes, which make it the *locus classicus* of the illustrated Persian manuscript at the most exalted level of patronage. Contributing to this fairytale quality are, to paraphrase Wilkinson, the brilliance of its palette and the gaiety of its spirit, balanced by a suavity of both pictorial narrative and pictorial epic movement.<sup>36</sup>

This otherworldly quality remains unaffected by any thematic preoccupation; to the contrary, tragic or fierce or grandly heroic subjects are all transformed, in this manuscript, into remote and enchanting visions enacted by doll-like personages. In the focus of its subjects, too, Muḥammad Jūkī's *Shāhnāma* appears to be very different from those of his brothers. Bāysunghur's pictorial insistence on images of legitimacy and good government, of princely responsibilities and obligations, is virtually absent from Jūkī's manuscript, unless "Iskandar Comforts the Dying Dārā" (fol. 313v) is so interpreted. Equally absent is the balanced representation of *bazm u razm* so prevalent in Ibrāhīm's manuscript. There are no feasts and receptions, save the specific and still unique picture in which the silken image of Rustam is shown to his grandfather, Sām (fol. 30v), and only one hunting scene, the quite traditionally rendered "Bahrām Gūr Hunts with Āzāda" (fol. 362v), also found in Ibrāhīm's *Shāhnāma* and having antecedents in medieval inlaid metalwares and painted ceramics—all of which appear to derive, ultimately, from Sassanian representations.<sup>37</sup>

Seven battle scenes, six duels (fig. 4), and similar scenes of murder and death, one each, would appear to emphasize the more bloodthirsty aspect of the *Shāhnāma*; yet even these subjects are entirely transmuted in the masterful hands of the artists who worked on Muḥammad Jūkī's manuscript, transformed into images no less fantastic than the five pictures whose subjects are truly mythical or supernatural. Only one picture treats of princely privilege and patronage, "Firdausī and the Poets of Ghazna" (fol. 16v), and only two of princely skills. Four focus on the lineage of the noble hero, Rustam, as distinct from princely families; indeed, the deeds of Rustam and other heroes of the *Shāhnāma* receive a great

deal of pictorial emphasis. Does the absence of pictures of princely prerogatives and responsibilities in Muḥammad Jūkī's *Shāhnāma* perhaps represent Jūkī's own position within the family of Shāh Rukh?

If any theme within this enchanting ensemble can be singled out, it would be one of the primary concerns of the text itself, the long-lived and disastrous conflict between Iran and Turan, which is pictorially reflected in no fewer than ten pictures in Muḥammad Jūkī's manuscript. A second group of pictures also suggests a concern with Iranian religious life. Four paintings focus on Isfandiyār, not only a princely hero whose seven *khvāns* surpass those of Rostam but a religious hero as well, connected with the advent of Zoroaster;<sup>38</sup> another picture's "hero" is Qubād, who misguidedly embraced the heresy of Mazdak; while the last picture in the manuscript, "Yazdigird Hides in the Mill" (fol. 531r, a relatively uncommon picture) presages Iran's passage from the religion of Zoroaster to that of Muḥammad.

### *Similarities and Differences among the Three Manuscripts*

Especially since their inclusion in the seminal London exhibition of 1931, commentators have discussed the extent to which each of these manuscripts typifies the place and (presumed) date at which it was created.<sup>39</sup> Differences of style between the two Herat manuscripts and the Shiraz copy are evident; another obvious difference is in the present size of the illustrative programs: twenty-one and thirty-one in the former, as opposed to forty-seven in the latter (the possibility that Muḥammad Jūkī's manuscript may have originally been intended to have up to a dozen more is quite important to note but remains hypothetical). More importantly, in comparison with the massive illustrative program that virtually always characterizes *Shāhnāma* manuscripts from the fourteenth century onward (see n. 15 and Appendix B for a preliminary list of illustrated Timurid *Shāhnāma* manuscripts), such pictorial restriction implies the deliberate elimination of material so that what remains constitutes a very specific choice of subjects. A corollary observation is the difference in the illustrative program of each manuscript. Together, they suggest that each princely patron deliberately chose to say something different by means of the pictorial language of his illustrated *Shāhnāma*.

### *Subjects and Compositions*

Only four subjects are common to all three manuscripts: "Firdausī and the Poets of Ghazna," "Rostam . . . Takes the Liver of the White *Dīv*" (figs. 5–7), "The Murder of Siyāwush," and "Rostam Pulls the Khāqān of Chīn from his Elephant" (figs. 9–11) (see also Appendix A).<sup>40</sup> As to the underlying significance that each of these pictures might bear within the larger program of the manuscript, "Firdausī and the Poets of Ghazna" seems an especially appropriate picture for these Timurid princes and could be interpreted as a pictorial gloss on the literary tastes they shared. "Rostam . . . Takes the Liver of the White *Dīv*" (figs. 5–8) illustrates the *Shāhnāma*'s emphasis on the heroic and the mythical. "The Murder of Siyāwush" depicts a key tragedy in the bitter and continuous confrontation between Iran and Turan, even though the episode is essentially private in scale and the iconographical specificity of the

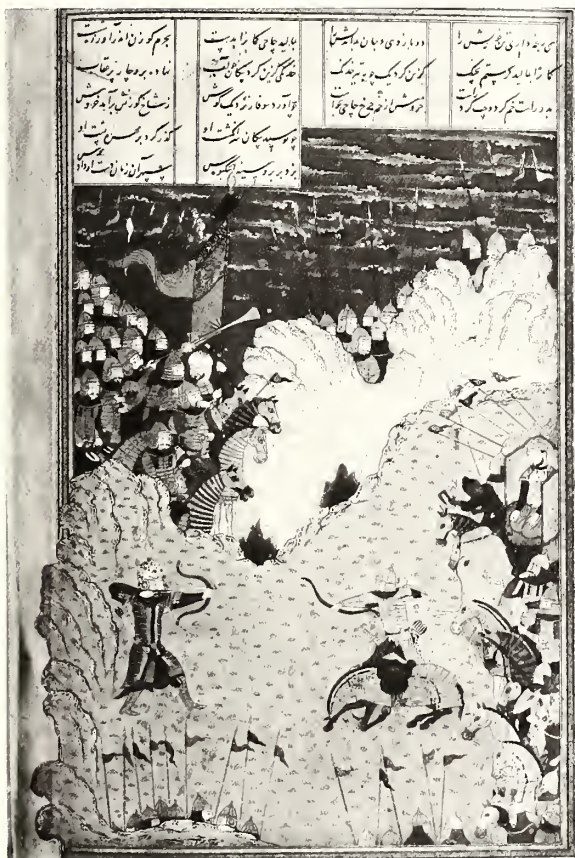


FIG. 4. "Rostam Shoots Ashkabab and His Horse," *Shāhnāma*, ca. 1440. London, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Morley 239, fol. 145v.





FIG. 5. "Rustam's Last *Khvān*: He Takes the Liver of the White *Dīv*," *Shāhnāma*, 833/1430. Tehran, Gulistan Palace Library, MS 61, p. 101.



FIG. 6. "Rustam's Last *Khvān*: He Takes the Liver of the White *Dīv*," *Shāhnāma*, 1430-35? Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ouseley Add. 176, fol. 71r.



FIG. 7. "Rustam's Last *Khvān*: He Takes the Liver of the White *Dīv*," *Shāhnāma*, ca. 1440. London, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Morley 239, fol. 44v.



FIG. 8. "Rustam's Last *Khvān*: He Takes the Liver of the White *Dīv*," *Shāhnāma*, in a volume of *Epics*, 800/1397-98. Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, P. 114, fol. 50r.





FIG. 9. "Rustam Pulls the Khāqān of Chīn from His Elephant," *Shāhnāma*, 833/1430. Tehran, Gulistan Palace Library, MS 61, p. 319.



FIG. 11. "Rustam Pulls the Khāqān of Chīn from His Elephant," *Shāhnāma*, ca. 1440. London, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Morley 239, fol. 155v.



FIG. 10. "Rustam Pulls the Khāqān of Chīn from His Elephant," *Shāhnāma*, 1430–35? Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ouseley Add. 176, fol. 164r.

basin not always observed. "Rustam Pulls the Khāqān of Chīn from His Elephant" (figs. 9–11), another episode in the epic conflict between Iran and Turan, is—in the two Herat manuscripts, figs. 9 and 11—a picture of majestic subject and scale. Ibrāhīm's reduces the personages and compresses the composition (fig. 10), but it is immediately recognizable to anyone familiar with the text.

While the three manuscripts appear to differ in the meaning each was intended to convey, as well as in the style of their illustrations, they do seem to share a sparing use of earlier compositional models. Indeed, "Rustam . . . Takes the Liver of the White *Dīv*" (figs. 5–7) is the only example of such an episode repeated in both subject and composition from the earliest to the latest manuscript. Moreover, in all three, this picture virtually repeats a composition (fig. 8) in the volume of *Epics* of 800/1397–98 that was presumably copied in Shiraz for (equally presumably) either 'Umar Shaykh ibn Tīmūr or his son, Iskandar<sup>41</sup> (see Appendix A). Apart from stylistic differences, the only notable change is that Muḥammad Jūkī's picture reverses the composition, as his artists did with at least three other shared subjects, "Rustam Slays His Son Suhrāb,"<sup>42</sup> "Rustam Pulls the Khāqān . . . from His Elephant" (figs. 9–11), and "Bahrām Gūr Hunts With Āzāda" (see n. 37). And apart from "Rustam . . . Takes the Liver of the White *Dīv*," only two of the three manuscripts ever seem to reproduce the same subjects (again, see Appendix A) by the same composition, however distant may be the source. Ibrāhīm's "Farīdūn





FIG. 12. "Farīdūn Nails Zakhāk on Mount Damāvand," *Shāhnāma*, 1430-35? Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ouseley Add. 176, fol. 30r.

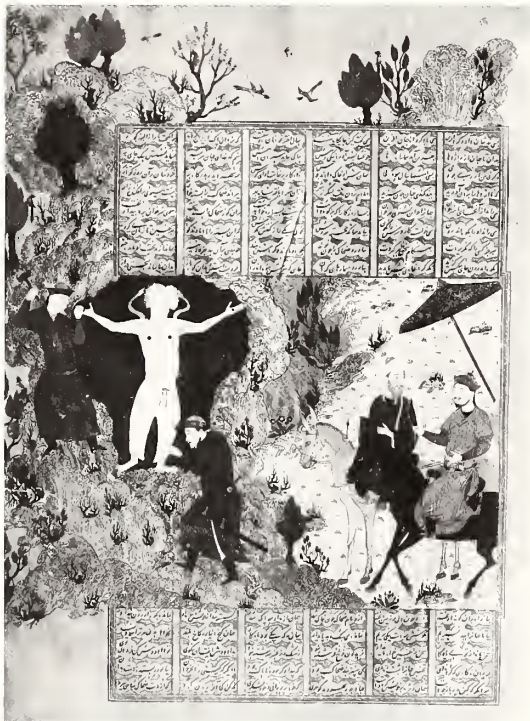


FIG. 14. "Farīdūn Nails Zakhāk on Mount Damāvand," *Shāhnāma*, 833/1430. Tehran, Gulistan Palace Library, MS 61, p. 40.

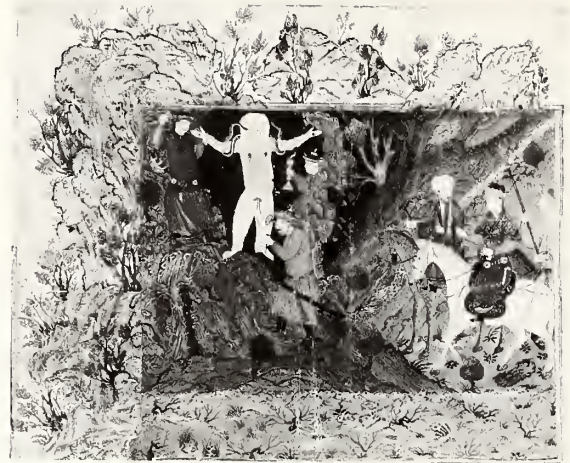


FIG. 13. "Farīdūn Nails Zakhāk on Mount Damāvand." Between 1356 and 1374? Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, H. 2153, fol. 82r.

Nails Zakhāk on Mount Damāvand" (fig. 12) derives from the same Jalayirid model (fig. 13) as Bāysunghur's (fig. 14); Ibrāhīm's "Jamshīd Teaches the Crafts" is a more distant and reduced version of that picture in Bāysunghur's manuscript. It is true that one of the three double-page compositions that opens Ibrāhīm's manuscript, "Ibrāhīm Sultān Directs a Battle" (fig. 1), was used as a model for the only double-page composition in Muḥammad Jūkī's manuscript, "The Combat between Isfandiyār and Arjāsp" (fig. 15); although not an exact copy, it bears a surprising resemblance to one of the more complex of Ibrāhīm's Shiraz pictures.<sup>43</sup>

To complicate this aspect of the discussion, Ibrāhīm's *Shāhnāma* shares six additional subjects with that of Muḥammad Jūkī (indicated in Appendix A) and four (counting the double-page hunting-scene frontispiece) with Bāysunghur's, which shares only one additional subject with Muḥammad Jūkī's manuscript. Among the three manuscripts, the same subject is often depicted in quite different compositions, for example, "Firdausī and the Poets of Ghazna" and "Isfandiyār Slays Arjāsp in the Brazen Hold." Thus, in their choice of subjects and despite their stylistic and qualitative similarities, both the Herati manuscripts appear to be pictorially more independent creations than is Ibrāhīm's Shiraz copy. Adamova's proposition "that every royal manuscript has several illustrations copied from older works, of which three are more or less exact copies,"<sup>44</sup> would seem—at first—not to apply to





FIG. 15. "The Combat between Isfandiyār and Arjasp," *Shāhnāma*, ca. 1440.  
London, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Morley 239, fols. 269v–270r.

these three Timurid princely manuscripts. I would suggest, however, that two points mitigate an apparent contradiction. The first is the stylistic differences between Ibrāhīm's Shiraz manuscript and his brothers' Herat creations, which surely obfuscate the argument as Adamova has framed it. Ibrāhīm's *Shāhnāma* shares eight picture subjects with Bāysunghur's manuscript, although whether three, or more, repeat Bāysunghur's *compositions* (either "more" or "less" being a secondary issue, for the moment) is open to interpretation, given the drastically different manner of conceiving illustrations in Ibrāhīm's Shiraz workshops, which is far more than a simple difference in the style of painting. How to interpret such drastic differences between pictures in the two manuscripts as "Rustam Pulls the Khāqān . . . from His Elephant" (figs. 9–11), or similar "parallels," poses highly interesting problems, with fascinating ramifications, which must be dealt

with elsewhere. The second point is that, given the possibility that Jūkī's manuscript was never completed, the "missing" two pictures in this manuscript that would otherwise repeat compositions in Bāysunghur's manuscript may simply not have survived—or may have been planned but never executed.

Two other features of a different kind also distinguish Ibrāhīm's *Shāhnāma* from those of his brothers. The first is the manner in which he "appears" in his own manuscript. It has long been assumed that, in the double-page frontispiece of Bāysunghur's *Shāhnāma* (fig. 16), the mounted figure accorded the royal prerogatives of the parasol, wine cup, and music is the prince himself, partly because of the resemblance to "portraits" in other of Bāysunghur's manuscripts.<sup>45</sup> In the same way—as has already been noted—Muḥammad Jūkī's painters made use of the stylistic model furnished by the large and elaborate



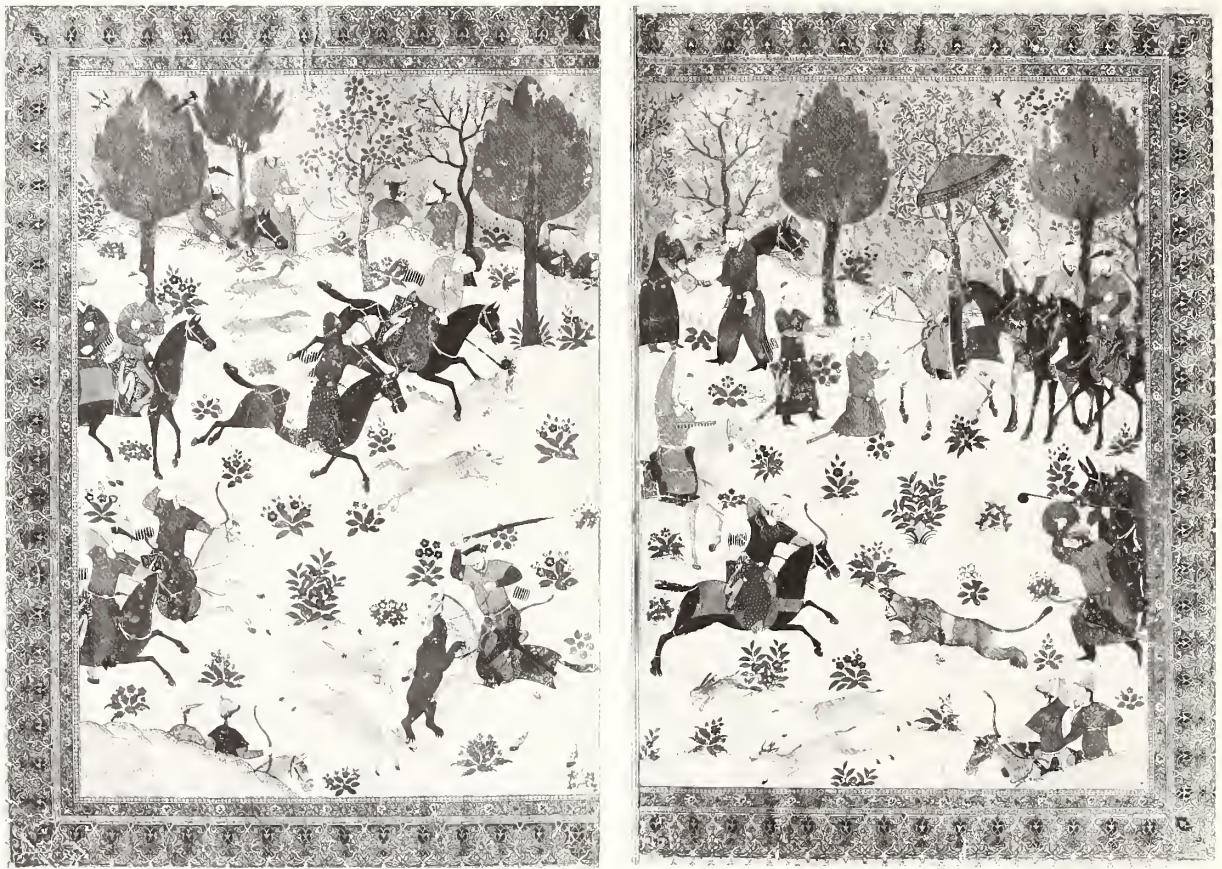


FIG. 16. "A Princely Hunt," *Shāhnāma*, 833/1430. Tehran, Gulistan Palace Library, MS 61, pp. 3–4.

double-page battle scene in Ibrāhīm's *Shāhnāma* (fig. 1). Although Jūkī's "portrait" occurs in a picture of a different subject (fig. 15) in a very different location in the text, deep into the body of the manuscript, it occurs in virtually the same place within the unique double-page picture as does Ibrāhīm's in the corresponding picture of his *Shāhnāma* (fig. 1).<sup>46</sup> Thus all three brothers share a position on the right of an ample double-page picture, mounted on horseback and shaded by the princely parasol. There, however, the resemblance ceases. In the cases of both Bāysunghur and Muḥammad Jūkī, this is their only "appearance" in their manuscripts, while Ibrāhīm is repeatedly woven into traditional pictorial formulations in his *Shāhnāma*. He is frankly glorified, portrayed as the chief player of princely roles, whose literary and visual antecedents in Iran are quite ancient, or with his consort in calmer and more genre-like occupations. It is hardly surprising, then, that the four pairs of pictures in which Ibrāhīm is so shown are not only larger and spread over two pages but treated

quite differently from the rest of the pictures in his *Shāhnāma* (and, indeed, the usual Shiraz picture of the 1420s and 1430s), with its relatively few figures, extremely simple backgrounds, and spare accoutrements.

The second point has long been evident in the literature and almost surely stems from the above observation, together with the fact of Ibrāhīm's premature demise: in the short span of time from Ibrāhīm's death in 1435 to approximately the middle of the century, his simplified and narrative manner of painting appears to have become the model *par excellence*—clear in conception and easily repeatable—for the rapid creation of non-princely or even commercial copies of Firdausī's *Shāhnāma* that were illustrated with very large numbers of pictures (see Appendix B). At least fifteen such manuscripts of Firdausī's *Shāhnāma* were copied in Shiraz ateliers during those years, and in their illustrative components as well as in their unmistakable styles, they are clearly based on the essential manner and style of Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān's own copy.



## Conclusions

Given the importance and popularity of Firdausī's *Shāhnāma* throughout Iranian history as a source of national history and language and an example of patriotic devotion to country, institutions, and rulers, its scarcity among the illustrated manuscripts commissioned by Timurid princes of any date is notable and surely not coincidental. Leaving aside extracts from this text in three celebrated early Timurid anthologies<sup>47</sup> and disregarding the political complications of the second half of the century, only four presently known illustrated *Shāhnāma* manuscripts may be associated with any of the princes of the house of Tīmūr: the three princely manuscripts that are the subject of this essay and the *Shāhnāma* in the volume of *Epics* of 800/1397–98. There is no presently known princely illustrated copy of the *Shāhnāma* dating from the period of Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bāyqara's rule in Herat; nor does any of the forty-seven other illustrated copies of Firdausī's *Shāhnāma* (compiled as Appendix B from entries published in the standard catalogues or personally noted) have a connection, specific or inferential, with the families of the Timurid princes or even of their amirs, as is the case with certain fine copies of Niẓāmī's *Khamsa*.<sup>48</sup> Instead, they are all nonprincely manuscripts (at least in style if not in intention and execution) or frankly provincial. Why this should be so, and whether such numbers contain any significant information, is a question to which more attention should be addressed.

For the moment, it must suffice to note that, as research done over the last four decades suggests, Timurid princes used fine copies of illuminated and illustrated manuscripts in the same way as they sponsored buildings: to express political attitudes and aspirations. A series of investigations of different illustrated texts<sup>49</sup> has pointed to the Timurid princely predilection for investing copies of certain texts with a specific meaning beyond what might be expected from the text alone. These princes chose their literary instruments widely, so as to add breadth to the political and cultural profile they were cultivating, but they also carefully chose the texts they wished to invest with additional meaning. And I would also suggest that one indication of the care they took with this task—especially in Herat under the influence of Bāysunghur but elsewhere and at other times as well—was the limitation of the

illustrative program of their manuscripts to a relatively small number of carefully considered subjects. What remained would add up to very particular statements conveying certain essential values held by the commissioning patrons about their own lives and the way they wished to be positioned. How else is the notable restriction on the numbers of illustrations in the *Shāhnāma* manuscripts commissioned by these three Timurid princes to be explained?

Bāysunghur's copy of Firdausī's epic poem suggests that in every possible way he sought to make it reflect its patron, a highly cultivated regent who possessed not only great literary and artistic taste but also a sense of his dynastic, as well as his personal, responsibilities: regent-governor in a land to whose denizens this text was as familiar as the air they breathed. His personal concern appeared to have begun with the text, to which he (may have) sponsored a new preface, composed for him in 829/1425–26. He pays conscious homage to past modes of creating fine manuscripts by using the six-column format of the previous century and also in his choice of pictorial models. His manuscript is physically large, befitting the sweep of its subject, as are its illustrations; its subjects emphasize princely obligations and the duty to govern fairly and wisely, and many pictures are rarely illustrated elsewhere;<sup>50</sup> these pictures differ in size, in protagonists, and by a certain gravity of atmosphere from the frozen and highly colored academic splendor of most of Bāysunghur's other illustrated texts; and its images of princely responsibility not only underscore these themes inherent in Firdausī's text but are themselves emphasized by the illuminated table of the kings of Iran. Bāysunghur's *Shāhnāma* is truly a prince's *Book of Kings*, an illustrated "title deed of national nobility," or—as Firdausī himself wrote—a "book . . . [into which] men of knowledge may look . . . and find in it all about the wisdom . . . of the kings, noblemen and sages, . . . good institutions, . . . justice and judicial norms . . . and respecting honor."<sup>51</sup>

Muḥammad Jūkī's *Shāhnāma* makes use of both Bāysunghur's text-recension and its pictorial style to create a very different kind of manuscript. His volume is somewhat smaller than Bāysunghur's; its illustrations, smaller and painted in a notably lighter palette, breathe an air of fabled enchantment instead of high seriousness, so that illustrations of a subject also found in Bāysunghur's *Shāhnāma*, such as "Isfandiyār Slays Arjāsp in the



Brazen Hold," suggest remote fairy tale rather than immediate responsibility. Even the apparent emphasis on so major a *Shāhnāma* theme as the epic conflict between Iran and Turan is presented in pictorial language that almost verges on the frivolous. As in its general style of painting it draws on that of Bāysunghur's *Shāhnāma*, so in its compositions it makes use of aspects of Ibrāhīm's; indeed, the hand of Shiraz artists who had previously worked for Ibrāhīm has often been noted (fig. 4),<sup>52</sup> although the Shiraz manner has been quite transformed by the action of a different aesthetic. This suggests that, to Muḥammad Jūkī, a unified conception of the subjects that should illustrate a Timurid prince's *Shāhnāma* manuscript was less important than a unified aesthetic of execution. It also testifies to the versatility of the pictorial instrument developed by his brother's painters. For if Muḥammad Jūkī's *Shāhnāma* is the illustrated Persian manuscript of fantasy *par excellence*, it is also one created in the presence of an established notion of what such a manuscript could be; as a younger brother, Muḥammad Jūkī was in the perfect position to "improve upon the model" and to impose his own personal taste and style upon his brother's notion.

Ibrāhīm's *Shāhnāma* is, surprisingly, as eloquent a statement as is Bāysunghur's, even though the pictorial language in which he speaks differs greatly from that of his brothers' manuscripts. His *Shāhnāma* is the smallest of the three, but it has almost as much illumination as does Bāysunghur's, and of extremely high quality; its illustrative style is almost as unified as are those of both his brothers' manuscripts, albeit different. His manuscript also conveys as potent a political message as does Bāysunghur's. Yet it is a far less abstract message, for Ibrāhīm is personally inserted into its illustrative program as the prince who assumes the ancient Iranian prerogatives of royal warrior, hunter, host, and counselor. In its emphasis on family relationships it also expresses Ibrāhīm's dynastic preoccupations. By the date the *Shāhnāma* was being completed, he had almost certainly engaged Sharāf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī to write the panegyric biographies of the Timurid family; the illustrated *Ẓafarnāma*, the first volume of the intended trilogy and devoted to the exploits of Tīmūr, would be the next illustrated text to issue from his Shiraz workshops. Ironically, it was Ibrāhīm's *Shāhnāma*, with its comparatively crude and unrefined pictorial language, that was to have the most lasting influence in Timurid

Iran. Shorn of its personal focus and largely stripped of the pictorial concentration imposed by limiting the number of illustrations, the stylistic model it provided would live on in many manuscripts of Firdausī's text with traditionally large illustrative programs that were made in Shiraz between his premature death in 1435 and about 1450, quite apart from the large number of copies of other texts, such as the Vever Khvāju Kirmānī of 841/1437,<sup>53</sup> that were made in the same workshops at the same date. It is rarely recorded for whom these texts were made, but they are probably the earliest of the Timurid Shiraz commercial manuscripts. Of the three brothers, then, it was Ibrāhīm whose *Shāhnāma* had the greatest influence on posterity.

In the final analysis, I propose that, for all their differences, these three *Shāhnāma* manuscripts made for grandsons of Tīmūr should, nonetheless, be interpreted as far more alike than different in meaning, function, and purpose. Each prince's manuscript explores a different set of themes especially significant to the Iranized Turkic rulers of Iran: the Timurids' position as "Turani-ans," one of the two protagonists of the epic; the rights and responsibilities of ruling princes in Iran as prescribed in the *Shāhnāma* itself; the importance of family and dynastic connections and the orderly continuity of rulers; the loyalty due from subjects; the reiteration of past Iranian religious values; the Timurid princes' interest in the arts of the book, sponsors of so many fine examples of this art. Each manuscript expresses its patron's choice among these themes in a limited, even—in the case of Bāysunghur's and Muḥammad Jūkī's manuscripts—a severely restricted illustrative format. But collectively, all three convey a fundamental similarity of purpose, despite the apparent dissimilarity conferred by their patrons' choices of subject and style.

Taken as three different aspects of a broader whole, these manuscripts thus illuminate a set of political aspirations shared at a particular stage of Timurid dynastic history, in the fourth decade of the century. I suggest, moreover—always recalling that "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence"—that the reason no other Timurid prince ever commissioned an illustrated *Shāhnāma* was that no other texts, not Shāh Rukh's illustrated histories, nor the *Ẓafarnāmas* of both Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān and Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bāyqara, made a more relevant statement of one of *their* patrons' specific political preoccupations: their position *vis-à-*

*vis* the Iranian people over whom their house governed. Shāh Rukh's sons' illustrated *Shāhnāma* manuscripts thus testify to a specifically Timurid conception of Firdausī's epic by which the Timurid rulers might stress the notions they considered crucial to the Iranian vision of kingship that Firdausī had set forth in his *Shāhnāma*. Such especially distilled verbal and visual statements provide yet more convincing evidence of the Timurid predilection for using essentially personal works of art—private, precious, small-scale, illustrated manuscripts—as instruments possessed of a distinct political charge. The copies of Firdausī's *Shāhnāma* commissioned by the Turkic princes of the House of Tīmūr, in their restricted illustrative programs and their careful exploration of certain crucial themes, stand alone among those commissioned by princes of almost any other ruling dynasty of Iran, confirming the uniqueness of the illustrated Timurid manuscript and the special significance with which the Timurids invested these private and personal creations.

### *Postscript*

While this essay was in proof stage, I was reminded that the beautiful and mysterious painting, "Tahmīna Entering the Chamber of Rustam,"<sup>54</sup> deserves some notice in it. This picture was intentionally omitted from the discussion of princely Timurid *Shāhnāma* manuscripts—

precisely because it has never been associated with any surviving Timurid manuscript, Sagan's dictum notwithstanding. Its superlative richness, in the arrangement of the architecture and furnishings as well as the decoration of the chamber in which the event occurs, does give rise to speculation on how such pictorial intensity might have been sustained throughout the entire program of illustrations for a *Shāhnāma*, even one with the typically restricted format of Bāysunghur's. Thomas Lentz and Glenn Lowry have themselves offered a speculation, following the elimination of names associated with Iskandar-Sultān from the words in the inscription above the three windows in the bay to leave only the name "Alā' al-Daula":<sup>55</sup> perhaps the picture never formed part of an entire manuscript but was instead mounted in the album or miscellany (*jung*) that had been ordered by Bāysunghur but was only completed by 'Alā' al-Daula ibn Bāysunghur after his father's death.<sup>56</sup> The setting of this picture seems still to be influenced by late-Baghdad interiors of the kind found in Sultān-Aḥmad's *masnavīs* of 798/1396, while the figural manner and the overgarment of the attendant, with its multiple straps, all recall Iskandar's Shiraz style. The painting itself would not be improbable as a work of about 1420, perhaps connected with a marriage, its present inscription added later, just after Bāysunghur's death, in 1433, by his son 'Alā' al-Daula.



## Notes

It will be evident how much this article owes to the dedicatee, without whose encouragement at a crucial stage in my studies I would never have continued to work in this arena. In addition, I am grateful to Judith Lerner for a fundamental and practical suggestion; to A. T. Adamova for her stimulating study on the repetition of compositions in Timurid painting, which made me reconsider certain relevant problems; to Manijeh Bayani, for offering "access" to a library that still is frustratingly inaccessible; to Doris Nicholson, in the Oriental Department of the Bodleian Library, who checked an important detail at the last minute; and—as always—to Ernst J. Grube.

1. *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century*, an exhibition organized by the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, April to November 1989, catalogue by Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry (Los Angeles: Museum Associates, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1989). Prepared as a companion to the exhibition and reflecting its special emphasis on manuscripts is Wheeler M. Thackston's selection and translation of relevant texts, *A Century of Princes: Sources on Timurid History and Art* (Cambridge [Mass.]: The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1989). The Sackler Gallery also devoted the Spring 1989 issue of its house magazine, *Asian Art*, to the Timurid arts and the exhibition; it includes articles by Glenn D. Lowry, David Bevington, Beatrice Forbes Manz, Lisa Golombek, and the present writer.
2. The following are the most notable: 1) Selected papers from "Timurid and Turkmen Societies in Transition: Iran in the Fifteenth Century," held in Toronto during the November 1989 annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association of North America, have been published as *Timurid Art and Culture: Iran and Central Asia in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Lisa Golombek and Maria Subtelny, *Studies in Islamic Art and Architecture, Supplements to Muqarnas* 6 (1992). 2) Forthcoming papers from a one-day symposium on the Timurid legacy, organized by the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland and held in London on March 7, 1991, include those on historical issues by Beatrice Forbes Manz and Stephen Dale and those on art and architecture by Ernst J. Grube, Robert Hillenbrand, and this writer. Also in press is another volume, the results of a one-day symposium held in New York City late in 1984, sponsored jointly by The Islamic Art Foundation and the Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies at New York University, entitled *15th Century Persian Art and Timurid Patronage*; authors include Jo-Ann Gross, Linda Komaroff, and Thomas W. Lentz. Subsequent publications completely or partially concerned with the Timurid arts include the published version of Linda Komaroff's thesis, *The Golden Disk of Heaven: Metalwork of Timurid Iran*, announced as forthcoming late in 1992 (*Timurid Art and Culture*, 156 n. 5); two further articles on Ibrāhīm-Sultān's illustrated *Zafarnāma* by this writer (see n. 28); and parts of the catalogue of the A. Soudavar Collection, accompanying an exhibition opened at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in November 1992.
3. Of the large historical and critical bibliography on Firdausi's text, the following have been especially useful in writing this essay: A. J. Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1958), ch. 2, esp. 44–50; Vladimir Minorsky, "The Older Preface to the *Shāh-nāma*" (1956; rpt. in *Iranica: Twenty Articles, Publications of the University of Tehran* 775 [Hertford: Stephen Austin, 1964]), 260–73, in which he translates, from the Persian of Mirzā Muḥammad Qazvīnī, Firdausi's preface to the oldest Persian version of the *Shāhnāma*; Reuben Levy's prologue in his abridged translation, *The Epic of the Kings: Shah-nama, The National Epic of Persia by Ferdowsi*, Persian Heritage Series (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967); and Jan Rypka's comments in Jan Rypka et al., *History of Persian Literature*, trans. P. Van Popta-Hope (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1968), 154–66. On the *Shāhnāma* and the many ways in which it was given visual form in pre-Timurid Iran, three recent studies by A. S. Melikian-Chirvani are indispensable, not only for the information they contain, especially the quotations from Persian poetry, but for the Iranian point of view they convey: "Le *Shāh-Nāme*, la gnose Soufie et le pouvoir mongol," *Journal Asiatique* 272 (1984): 249–337; "Le Livre des Rois, miroir du destin," *Studia Iranica* 17 (1988): 7–46, and "Le Livre des Rois, miroir du destin: II—Takht-e Soleyman et la symbolique du *Shāh-Nāme*," *Studia Iranica* 20 (1991): 33–148, pls. I–XVI.
4. MS 61. First shown outside Iran in London in 1931: Laurence Binyon, J. V. S. Wilkinson, and Basil Gray, *Persian Miniature Painting, Including a Critical and Descriptive Catalogue of the Miniatures Exhibited at Burlington House, January–March, 1931* (London: Oxford University Press [Humphrey Milford], 1933; rpt. several times since 1971, with minor corrections requested by both the Bodleian and Beatty Libraries) [hereafter BWG]; cat. 49, pp. 56, 69–71, pls. XLIIIA–XLIXB: all 21 paintings were exhibited. The most recent and complete bibliography remains that compiled by Thomas W. Lentz, "Painting at Herat under Baysunghur ibn Shah-rukh" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1985), 386–87; the manuscript is fully catalogued as nos. 54–75, pp. 385–421, and all too briefly discussed on

- pp. 102–9. It has been only sporadically reproduced; among the more useful are the very large color plates (eight paintings only) in *Iran: Miniatures Persanes—Bibliothèque Impériale* (Paris: UNESCO, 1956), pls. I–IX (also in English); in 1962 a “miniature” paperback edition was printed in English with the same plate numbers. *An Album of Miniatures and Illuminations from the Baysonghori Manuscript of the Shahnama of Ferdowsi—Preserved in the Imperial Library, Tehran*, published in Tehran on the occasion of the 2500th anniversary of the Persian monarchy in 1971, is a volume of bad watercolor copies of the illustrations and serves little purpose today other than to confirm the subject and composition of miniatures; it is rare and I have not been able to locate a copy for further reference.
5. Morley 239. Nine paintings were exhibited at Burlington House in 1931: BWG, cat. 67, pp. 78–79 and 93, pl. XVIII; the first publication is *The Shāhnāmā of Firdausī, With 24 Illustrations from a Fifteenth-Century Manuscript Formerly in the Imperial Library, Delhi, and now in the Possession of the Royal Asiatic Society, Described by J. V. S. Wilkinson, With an Introduction on the Paintings by Laurence Binyon* (London: The India Society, 1931); B. W. Robinson completed the record: “Unpublished Paintings from a XVth Century ‘Book of Kings’,” *Apollo Miscellany* (1951), 17–23. The same author’s “The Shāhnāmā of Muḥammad Jūkī, RAS. MS 239,” *The Royal Asiatic Society: Its History and Treasures*, ed. Stuart Simmonds and Simon Digby (Leiden & London: E. J. Brill, 1979), 83–102, pls. III–X, is the most informative of recent studies. It was exhibited in 1989: Lentz and Lowry, *Princely Vision*, cat. 43, p. 338.
  6. Ouseley Add. 176. Also exhibited for the first time at Burlington House in 1931: BWG, cat. 6, pp. 55, 67–68, pls. XXXVIII–XLB and frontispiece (in the reprint, in color following p. 16). B. W. Robinson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Persian Paintings in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 16–22, cat. 81–132, pls. I, IV, describes the complete manuscript; selected paintings are also reproduced by, among others: Ivan Stchoukine, *Les peintures des manuscrits Tīmūrides* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1954), pls. XXII–XXVI; Basil Gray, *Persian Painting* (Geneva: Éditions d’Art Albert Skira, 1961), 98 and 100 (in color); and B. W. Robinson and Basil Gray, *The Persian Art of the Book: Catalogue of an Exhibition Held at the Bodleian Library to Mark the Sixth International Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press [Vivian Ridler], 1972), cat. 7–16, p. 11, and pls. IV–VI. Only the more important and/or accessible publications are noted here; this important manuscript has never been completely illustrated and would more than justify a monograph publication in color. It too was exhibited in 1989: Lentz and Lowry, *Princely Vision*, cat. 58, p. 341.
  7. Ernst J. Grube and Eleanor Sims, “The School of Herat from 1400 to 1450,” *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia*, ed. Basil Gray (Paris and London: UNESCO and Serindia, 1979), 158–60 passim.
  8. Notably the University of Michigan *Shāhnāmā* project, which resulted in the *Preliminary Index of Shah-Nameh Illustrations*, comp. Jill Norgren and Edward Davis (unpublished typescript, Ann Arbor, 1969), to which Oleg contributed the introduction; and the famous 1975 Harvard seminar on the so-called “Demotte” manuscript, now more commonly referred to as “The Great Mongol *Shāhnāmā*,” and its ensuing publication, with Sheila Blair: *Epic Images and Contemporary History: The Illustrations of the Great Mongol Shahnama* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
  9. Jean, Duc de Berri (1340–1416) was the third son of the Valois King of France, Jean II; René d’Anjou (1409–80) was no less passionate a princely patron of the arts. See Millard Meiss, with the assistance of Sharon Off Dunlap Smith and Elizabeth Homes Beatson, *French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry: The Limbourgs and Their Contemporaries*, 2 vols. (New York: George Braziller/The Pierpont Morgan Library, 1974), esp. vol. 1, Appendices A–B, 415–20.
  10. Brief biographies of each prince, from Daulatshāh’s *Tadkhirat al-Shuʿarā*, translated from Muḥammad ‘Abbāsī’s Tehran edition of 1337 (*sic*), are in Thackston, *Century of Princes*: Bāysunghur, 22–24, Ibrāhīm-Sultān, 33–34, and Muḥammad Jūkī, 35–36; the discussion of the *Khamsas* is mentioned by V. V. Barthold in *Ulugh Beg*, vol. 2 of *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), 134–35, also quoting Daulatshāh, from E. G. Browne’s edition of 1901; in Thackston, *Century of Princes*, 23–24; this is the source of the comment in Lentz and Lowry, *Princely Vision*, 112; see also their 126–32 for comments on these three *Shāhnāmā* manuscripts and 160–63 for a general discussion of the education of Timurid princes.
  11. Bāysunghur is said to have revised Firdausī’s text and written a new preface to it, both of which are said to have first appeared in an unillustrated manuscript dated 829/1425–26; Rypka, *Persian Literature*, ascribes this information to Y. E. Bertels (170 n. 77; also briefly mentioned on 158). A. M. Piemontese, in the 1980 study announcing the earliest known *Shāhnāmā* copy, notes that there is no critical edition of the Bāysunghurī preface of 829/1425, “Nuova Luce su Firdawsī: Uno



'*Shāhnāma*' datato 614 H./1217 a Firenze," *Annali dell'Istituto Orientale de Napoli*, n.s. 30, 40 (1980): 32, and also notes two further works he had not (then) been able to read: an untitled study by M. L. Lozinsky, *Ferdovsi 934–1934* (Leningrad, 1934 [sic]), 197–217, and H. Kanus-Credé's translation of Bertels' introduction to his *Shāhnāma* edition: "Zur russischen Ausgabe des Schahname," *Iranistische Mitteilungen* 6 (1972): 7–41. Following this translation, on 42–53 is an unsigned "article" simply entitled "Das Vorwort des Bāysunghur"; who wrote it is unclear. The most plausible deduction, at present, seems to be that Bertels had collected some materials for an article on the Bāysunghur preface that would include a translation, from Persian, of the text of the preface but died before completing it; Kanus-Credé, after translating Bertels' *Shāhnāma* introduction, made use of Bertels' notes on the Bāysunghur preface to compose some comments surrounding a partial translation, into German, of Bāysunghur's text (44–46, with additional passages on 47–48). Compounding the larger problem of the Bāysunghur preface is a volume to which my attention was drawn as this article was in the final stages of preparation: *Firdausi Celebration, 935–1935*, ed. David Smith (New York: McFarlane, Warde, McFarlane, 1936); essentially a volume publishing addresses delivered at a ceremony at Columbia University commemorating the Millennium of Firdausi's birth, it also includes a list of *Shāhnāma* manuscripts, 27–68, in which is noted the presence of either the older or the "Baisunghari's" preface. The list is cryptic in the extreme, since it includes well-known manuscripts in accessible public collections as well as tantalizing references to others never heard of nor published; of the thirty-six fifteenth-century entries—both with and without illustrations—only eight (nine, but the Bāysunghur *Shāhnāma* is entered twice) are identifiable at first glance (and listed in my Appendix B); each entry in this list needs verification, which would have taken more time than was available. Art historians have, understandably, made use of any of this information with skepticism; the most recent amplified statement is that by Lentz, "Painting at Herat": 101–2, 149–50, and 186 nn. 54–55. Finally, Manijeh Bayani has graciously checked her father's catalogue of the former Imperial Palace Library, which appeared posthumously: Mehdi Bayani, *Nātamām Ta' dādī az Kitābhā-yi Kitābhāna-yi Shātanāfi*, [An] *Incomplete Catalogue of Some Manuscripts in the Imperial Library* (Tehran: Bank Melli, n.d. but probably 1968); the first category discussed is Firdausi's *Shāhnāma*, and the first entry, #295, is Bāysunghur's illustrated manuscript of 833/1430. Certain that her father would never have countenanced a partial publication of such a work and noting that the second entry, #296, is a

*Shāhnāma* of 847/1443 (see Appendix B), she suggests that the unillustrated *Shāhnāma* of 829/1428–29 with the new preface would almost certainly have been the last entry—#294—in the first volume of her father's catalogue of Persian manuscripts in what is now called the Gulistan Palace Library.

12. BWG, 70–71; Lentz, "Painting at Herat," 392–421.
13. Robinson, "Muḥammad Jūkī," 92–94.
14. Robinson, *Bodleian*, 16–22, cat. 81–132.
15. This is a constant feature of illustrated manuscripts of Firdausi's epic from the earliest date at which they survive: the so-called "Small" *Shāhnāmas*, a rubric under which four undated (but late-thirteenth- to early-fourteenth-century), dispersed, and incomplete manuscripts have been grouped, contain, as a group, over 250 illustrations; the four Injū *Shāhnāma* manuscripts, dated between 731/1330 and 753/1352, contain respectively 90, 52, 103, and 109 illustrations—over 350 pictures altogether; the undated fragment of the Great Mongol *Shāhnāma* comprises 58 surviving illustrations. It is a further gesture of homage to Grabar that two of the most important references to these pre-Timurid *Shāhnāma* studies issue from his workshop, so to speak. Mariana S. Simpson's 1978 doctoral thesis, printed as *The Illustration of an Epic: The Earliest Shahnama Manuscripts* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1979), reconstructed three of the four "Small" *Shāhnāma* manuscripts, and her patient work, most notably evident in the appendices, is indispensable: see, for instance, Appendix 5, "The Illustrative Series," 383–96. Blair and Grabar's publication on the fragmentary Great Mongol *Shāhnāma*, cited in n. 8 above, also has useful appendices, one of which—2, pp. 184–89—postulates an original size for the manuscript of at least 287 folios; more recently, Blair has reconsidered the problem, suggesting that the illustrative component of the manuscript is no more than a quarter complete and that it originally numbered 190 illustrations: "On the Track of the 'Demotte' *Shahnama* Manuscript," *Les Manuscrits du Moyen-Orient: Essais de codicologie et de paléographie*, ed. François Déroche (Istanbul: Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes/Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale [Varia Turcica 8], 1989), 125–31. As provincial productions, the Injū manuscripts have attracted less attention, especially the crucially important but dispersed manuscript of 741/1341, which remains unstudied and awaiting reconstruction in the *grabarī* manner; only the St. Petersburg *Shāhnāma* of 733/1333 has

been completely published, by A. T. Adamova and L. T. Gyuzal'yan, *Miniatyury Rukopisi Poemy "Shakhname" 1333 Goda* (Leningrad: Iskustvo, Leningradskoe Otdelenie, 1985).

16. BWG, 71; Lentz, "Painting at Herat," 100 (without specifying which of the two months of Jumādā) and 385; generally discussed on 100–109.
17. Access having been almost continuously restricted even before 1978, the measurements provided by BWG, 69, and still used by Lentz, remain the best approximation.
18. Nor is Bāysunghur's *Shāhnāma* unique in the Timurid period in being laid out with six columns of text, despite Robinson's comment in *Persian Paintings in the John Rylands Library* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers Ltd., 1980), 115: "No Persian *Shahnamas* written in six columns is known between the mid fourteenth and late sixteenth centuries." In addition to the Rylands manuscript, Pers. MS. 933, ca. 1430–40 (illustrated 114), which occasioned the comment, others are: a Shiraz-provincial *Shāhnāma* in St. Petersburg dated 849/1445 (illustrated BWG, pl. LVIB, and *Arts of the Book*, fig. 82); a widely dispersed manuscript variously placed between 1425 and 1450, also in a Shiraz-derived style; and a Turkman *Shāhnāma* dated 895/1489 in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin (Regina Hickmann, *Schätze islamischer Buchkunst* [Berlin: Volkseigener Verlag, 1989], 36), a curious variant of which is a *Shāhnāma* of about the same date and style but with the text written in five columns (Emil Preterorius, *Persische Miniaturen* [Munich: Piper-Bucherei, 1958], color pls. 1–2). See Appendix B for details of all manuscripts just noted. Moreover, the arrangement had remained common to the end of the fourteenth century; in addition to many of the manuscripts listed in n. 15 above, the following manuscripts dated (or datable) between 1350 and 1400 are laid out with six columns of text: the "Proto-Bāysunghur" fragment (discussed in the next text paragraph), several illustrations from which still retain part of the surrounding text (see n. 20 below for references); both Muzaffarid *Shāhnāmas*, one dated 772/1370 (TKS, H. 1511) (E. J. Grube, Filiz Çağman, and Zeren Akalay, *Topkapı Sarayı Collection: Islamic Painting* [Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1978], color pls. 12–13, and an Italian translation, published by E. J. Grube as *Miniature Islamiche, Topkapı Sarayı Istanbul* [Padova: CLEUP, 1975], cat. 8) and the later manuscript in the National Library in Cairo, dated 796/1393 (BWG, pls. XXVIII–XX); and the volume of *Epics* of 800/1397–98 (see n. 41 below and Appendix A; illustrated BWG, pl. XXXI, color illustrations in Gray, *Persian Painting*, 66, and *Arts of the Book*, pl.

XXXVIII). The six-column text layout is distinctly archaic for manuscripts issuing from Timurid princely ateliers in the fifteenth century, and I suggest that Bāysunghur used it deliberately. Nonprincely Timurid-period manuscripts with six columns of text, however, appear to present an entirely different problem. As early as the late 1960s, Robinson had been developing the hypothesis that Sultanate India might be the origin of a group of unlocalized Persian manuscripts whose unusual characteristics made them difficult to place in an Iranian milieu; indeed, the comment should be read together with his introduction to the entire section, "Timurid Painting in Western India," 95–96, in which he also summarized the arguments of Irma L. Fraad and Richard Ettinghausen, whose "Sultanate Painting in Indian Style," *Chhavi: Golden Jubilee Volume*, ed. Anand Krishna (Banaras: Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras Hindu University, 1971), 48–66, had set forth the problem as it was then conceived. Robinson was, perhaps, distracted by the possibility that the archaic six-column text layout might help to confirm a Sultanate origin for problem manuscripts. This feature is surely a diagnostic for particular times or places that did adhere to old-fashioned formulas of manuscript layout—but I suggest that where and when this occurred, and in how many centers, are questions that have yet to be answered.

19. BWG, 70–71; Lentz, "Painting at Herat," 103–4.
20. The group usually includes some, or all, of the paintings mounted on fols. 22v, 23r, 35r, 52v–53r, 65v, 73v, 82r, 100v, 102r, 103v, 157r, and 171v; the first group publication is by Nurhan Atasoy, "Four Istanbul Albums and Some Fragments from Fourteenth-Century Shah-Namehs," *Ars Orientalis* 8 (1970): 19–48: figs. 4, 6, 8, 10, 17–21, 23–24, 27. See also Ernst J. Grube, *Persian Painting in the Fourteenth Century: A Research Report*, Supplement 17 to *Annali* of the Istituto Orientale di Napoli, 38 (1978), 35, especially n. 115, for references up to 1978 (in the fourth line of the note, "fol. 72v" should be "73v"), and figs. 42–43, 45–46 (where the caption identifying the album should be "2153"), 48, 56. Finally, in a recent article and a more recent lecture, A. T. Adamova has proposed an explanation for the phenomenon that the number of compositions from one "royal manuscript" repeated in a later volume is virtually always three pictures, in her important and suggestive "Repetition of Compositions in Manuscripts: The *Khamasa* of Nizami in Leningrad," *Timurid Art and Culture*, 67–75.
21. Grube, *Research Report*, 35–38; Lentz, "Painting at Herat," 105–8 *passim*. See also Thackston (n. 8



- above), translating Bahrām Mirzā, 345.
22. Lentz, "Painting at Herat," 41–44 and *passim*.
  23. It was used in Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān's *Shāhnāma*, on fol. 30r (see Appendix A), while in the now-dispersed *Shāhnāma* made for Shāh Ṭahmāsp in the third and fourth decades of the sixteenth century, it is on fol. 37v; color illustration in S. C. Welch, *A Kings' Book of Kings: The Shah-Nameh of Shah Tahmasp* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972), 117.
  24. Grube, *Research Report*, figs. 46–49, where both pairs are compared.
  25. BWG, 70, pl. XLIIIA; Lentz, "Painting at Herat," 104. In the document that is presumably a report from the head of Bāysunghur's *kitābkhāna* to Bāysunghur himself, a *ḍibācha* (now understood to mean painted geometrical and floral illumination) for the *Shāhnāma* is noted as being designed by Maulānā 'Alī; a *Shāhnāma* binding is also discussed. Even in the absence of firm evidence, it is difficult not to wonder whether the manuscript in question might be this very *Shāhnāma*. If the *ḍibācha* of Maulānā 'Alī is less likely to be this table of the Kings of Persia, it should be recalled that the manuscript does contain three others. Lentz and Lowry, *Princely Vision*, 364–65; Thackston, *Century of Princes*, 323–27.
  26. Robinson, *Bodleian*, 16, refined to "about 1432–4" in Robinson and Gray, *Bodleian*, 11.
  27. The manuscript restorer and chemist, Don Baker, has recently cleaned the folios of Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān's *Zafarnāma* and has kindly shared some of his observations about Shiraz Timurid manuscripts. He tells me that the green pigment that burns through the paper of these manuscripts is compounded from copper carbonate; the blacker green pigment that stains dark on the opposing page is composed of orpiment and arsenic sulphide.
  28. In "The Paintings of the 1436 *Zafarnāma*," *The Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 14 (March 1990): 70; "Ibrahim-Sultan's Illustrated *Zafarnāma* and Its Impact in the Muslim East," *Timurid Art and Culture*, 138, 140; and "Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān's Illustrated *Zafar-nāmeḥ* of 839/1436," *Islamic Art* 4 (1990–91): 178 and 185–94, where all paintings in this now-reconstructed manuscript are reproduced.
  29. BWG, 68, (a); cf. Robinson, *Bodleian*, 21, cat. 124.
  30. This point is further examined in my forthcoming publication arising from a symposium on Islamic iconography held in Edinburgh in 1990: "The Iconography of the Illustrated Timurid *Zafarnāma* Manuscripts," Edinburgh, 1993.
  31. Fol. 280v, "Rustam Flees Up the Mountain from Isfandiyār," is illustrated in color, *Arts of the Book*, pl. XL; see also, among others, Stchoukine, *Peintures*, pl. XXV: fol. 186r, "Rustam Rescues Bīzhan from the Pit."
  32. Stchoukine, *Peintures*, pl. XXIII below: fol. 62r, "Rustam Catches His Horse, Rakhsh;" also in color, Gray, *Persian Painting*, 98.
  33. Wilkinson, *Shāh-Nāmah*, color frontispiece.
  34. Robinson, "Muḥammad Jūkī," 85–91, reviews the published record.
  35. Robinson, "Muḥammad Jūkī," 92–94.
  36. Wilkinson, *Shāh-Nāmah*, preface, [unnumbered] p. v.
  37. Stchoukine, *Peintures*, pl. LXVI: "The Portrait of the Child Rustam Shown . . . to Sām." For "Bahrām Gūr Hunts with Āzāda," cf. Stchoukine, *Peintures*, pl. XXVI, in Ibrāhīm's manuscript, with Wilkinson, *Shāh-Nāmah*, color pl. XX, and with the following (however out-of-date may be the attributions): *A Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present*, ed. Arthur Upham Pope and Phyllis Ackerman, 6 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1938–39; several reprints in 12 vols.): pl. 229A, "carved and engraved silver, post-Sasanian"; pls. 664 and 672, bowls, and 679, a tile, of *mināʿī* and gilded ceramic, thirteenth century; pl. 727, a luster-painted fourteenth-century tile; pl. 1300A–B, a twelfth-century relief-cast bronze plaque; pl. 1330C, a detail from the Blacas Ewer, 629/1232, brass inlaid with silver and copper. Studies with more up-to-date references are: Eva Baer, *Metalwork in Medieval Islamic Art* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1983), 274–77, including the "Guennol" silver plate (fig. 223), so similar to the rendition in Ibrāhīm's manuscript; and two studies by Maria Vittoria Fontana: "Re Bahrām e la sua schiava nei manoscritti d'epoca timuride," *Quaderni del Seminario di Iranistica, Uralo-Altaistica e Caucasologia dell'Università degli Studi di Venezia* 8 (1980): 91–112, figs. 1–32; and *La leggenda di Bahrām Gūr e Āzāda: Materiale per la storia di una tipologia figurativa dalle origini al XIV secolo* (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, Dipartimento di Studi Asiatici, Series Minor 24, 1986). In her Appendix I Fontana has grouped two sequential versions of the episode—Āzāda still mounted

- behind Bahrām or being trampled under foot (53–55); all the recorded fourteenth-century paintings depict Āzāda's unfortunate end, unlike the two Timurid paintings in the manuscripts here discussed, which revert to the Sassanian model as found on seals, stucco, and silver (cat. 1–16).
38. Marcia Maguire, "The Haft Khvān of Rustam and Isfandiyār," *Studies in Art and Literature of the Near East in Honor of Richard Ettinghausen*, ed. Peter J. Chelkowski (New York and Utah: New York University Press and the Middle East Center, 1974), 138ff.
  39. In addition to the comments (already referred to) of BWG, B. W. Robinson, Stchoukine, and this writer, those that might be quoted from other, and general, works are Gray, *Persian Painting*, 85, 92–93, and 95–96, and my very terse remarks in "Painting," from *The Arts of Persia*, ed. Ronald Ferrier (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1989), 206.
  40. Both the subject and the composition of the second and the fourth pictures recur in all three early Timurid princely copies of the *Shāhnāma* (albeit reversed in Muḥammad Jūkī's copy)—a different situation from shared subjects only, which is the case with the first and third pictures. In testing Adamova's hypothesis—that three pictures only will be repeated in later manuscripts produced in princely workshops—it will be important to distinguish between subject, and subject + composition.
  41. Divided between The British Library in London, Or. 2780, and The Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, P. 114; for the contents and illustrations of each section see: Charles Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, Supplement (London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1895; photolithographic rpt. 1966), 133, and Norah M. Titley, *Miniatures from Persian Manuscripts . . . in the British Library and the British Museum* (London: British Museum Publications, 1977), cat. 98, pp. 39–40; also A. J. Arberry, M. Minovi, and E. Blochet, *The Chester Beatty Library: A Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts and Miniatures*, vol. 1, ed. J. V. S. Wilkinson (Dublin: Hodges Figgis & Co. Ltd., 1959), 30–32.
  42. Cf. Robinson and Gray, *Bodleian*, pl. VI, with Robinson, *Bodleian*, fig. II.
  43. As B. W. Robinson has consistently observed: Robinson, *Bodleian*, 20–22, and Robinson, "Muḥammad Jūkī," 95–102.
  44. Adamova, *Timurid Art and Culture*, 72.
  45. BWG, 70; Lentz, "Painting at Herat," 86–87, 103, and nos. 17–18, 21–22, 29, and 55.
  46. Robinson, *Bodleian*, 20, 22; and Robinson, "Muḥammad Jūkī," 99.
  47. (1) A volume usually referred to as a *Miscellany*, in London, The British Library, Or. 27261, dated 813–14/1410–11 and copied for Iskandar-Sultān, almost certainly in Shiraz; for the contents, see Rieu, *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts* (London: 1881, rpt. 1966), 2:868–71, and for the illustrations, Titley, *Miniatures*, 38–39. (2) A similar volume in Lisbon, The Gulbenkian Foundation, L. A. 161, dated 813/1411 and also copied for Iskandar, presumably in Shiraz; the contents have recently been analyzed by Priscilla P. Soucek, "The Manuscripts of Iskandar Sultan: Structure and Content," *Timurid Art and Culture*, 116–31. (3) The so-called *Anthology* in Berlin, now rejoined in the reunited Staatliche Museen, Museum für Islamische Kunst, J. 4628, copied in Shiraz in 823/1420 at the order of Ibrāhīm as a gift to Bāysunghur; its contents were analyzed by Ernst Kühnel, "Die Bāysunghur-Handschrift der Islamischen Kunstabteilung," *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, vol. 52 (1931), pt. 3, 133–52; Volkmar Enderlein, *Die Miniaturen der Berliner Bāysunghur-Handschrift* (Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1970), illustrates all but two miniatures, in color. Lentz and Lowry, *Princely Vision*, summarize the details of all three manuscripts in their Appendix II, 368 (the Berlin manuscript) and 370 (the Iskandar manuscript).
  48. On Or. 6810 in The British Library, made for the Amīr 'Alī Fārsī Barlās and dated 900/1494–95, see F. R. Martin and Sir Thomas Arnold, *The Nizami Manuscript Illuminated by Bihzad, Mirak, and Qasim 'Alī . . . in the British Museum (Or. 6810)* (Vienna: Printed for the Author [sic], 1926), where all miniatures are illustrated; also Stchoukine, *Peintures*, 78–81. An otherwise undistinguished late-fifteenth-century manuscript in the Nour Collection in London carries an inscription saying it was made for Bāysunghur b. Ya'qūb Beg Aq Quyunlu. I am more inclined to see it as a commercial manuscript purchased for this young prince; the manuscript and whatever problems it presents will be discussed in my contributions to the volumes on painting in the forthcoming catalogue of the Nour Collection.
  49. On the *Majmu'a-i Tavārīkh* of Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, made for Shāh Rukh and completed in 829/1425: Richard Ettinghausen, "An Illuminated Manuscript of



Hāfiz-i Abrū in Istanbul. Part I," *Kunst des Orients* 2 (1955): 30–44; on two copies of Sharāf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī's *Ẓafarnāma*: Ibrāhīm's of 839/1436 (references in n. 28); and Sulṭān-Husayn Bāyqara's, dated 872/1467–68, Eleanor Sims, "Sultan Husayn Bayqara's Zafar-Namah and Its Miniatures," *Vllth International Congress of Iranian Art & Archaeology, Oxford, September 11–16th 1972* (Tehran: Iranian Centre for Archaeological Research, 1976), 299–311; on the entire surviving library of Bāysunghur, examined by Lentz, "Painting at Herat"; and on two other manuscripts connected with Sulṭān-Husayn Bāyqara: Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭar's *Manṭiq al-Tayr*, dated 892/1487–88, A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, "Khawāje Mirak Naqqāsh," *Journal Asiatique* 276 (1988): 97–146; and a copy of Sa'dī's *Būstān*, completed in 893/1488, Verna Prentice, "The Illustration of Sa'dī's Poetry in 15th Century Herat" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1977). See also Lentz and Lowry, *Princely Vision*, passim, especially chs. 2, where much of this material is referred to, and 4.

50. An assertion that can only begin to be tested by tools such as the *Preliminary Index of Shah-Nameh Illustrations* (n. 8 above), which is truly but the "first sketch of a dictionary" and may be taken as the roughest guide to the frequency with which many of the subjects illustrated in the three manuscripts under discussion have appeared; nonetheless, I suggest that the statement remains valid. A team of scholars and students with access to the appropriate photographic archives, a good library, and a relatively unsophisticated computer could today build on the examples of both the *Preliminary Index* and a similar subject index of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* illustrations recently assembled by Ernst J. Grube, published as Appendix III of his "Prolegomena for a Corpus Publication of Illustrated *Kalīla wa-Dimna* Manuscripts," *Islamic Art* 4 (1990–91): 405–25, to compile a more complete index of *Shāhnāma* illustrations, so that such assertions might—eventually—be answered by consulting the appropriate volume or print-out!
51. As edited by M. M. Qazvini and translated by Minorsky, "Older Preface," 266–67.
52. See n. 43 above; the composition of this picture in Jūkī's manuscript has astonishing similarities to a double-page illustration in Ibrāhīm's *Ẓafarnāma*: "The Forces of Tīmūr and Yildirim Beyāzid Arm for Battle," Sims, "*Ẓafar-nāmeḥ*," figs. 25–26.
53. Glenn D. Lowry, Milo Cleveland Beach, et al., *An Annotated and Illustrated Checklist of the Vever Collection* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), cat. 235, pp. 198–202.
54. Harvard University Art Museums, 1939.225. Eric Schroeder, *Persian Miniatures in the Fogg Museum of Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1942), 51–74; Marianna S. Simpson, *Arab and Persian Painting in the Fogg Art Museum* (Cambridge, Mass.: Fogg Art Museum/Harvard University, 1980), 36–37; Lentz and Lowry, *Princely Vision*, cat. 45, illustrated in color p. 130.
55. Simpson, *Arab and Persian Painting*, 36–37.
56. Thackston, *Century of Princes*, 346, quoting Dust Muḥammad; Lentz and Lowry, *Princely Vision*, cat. 45, p. 338.

## APPENDIX A

*The Subjects of Three Princely Timurid Shāhnāma Manuscripts*

Letters in parentheses after a page or folio number correspond to the abbreviations listed below and refer to other Timurid princely manuscripts in which the same subject is illustrated:

*Shāhnāma* (abbreviated as E)

in a larger volume of *Epics*, Shiraz (?), 800/1397–98, Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, P. 114

*Shāhnāma* (abbreviated as B)

Herat, 5 Jumādā I 833/31 January 1430, Tehran, Gulistan Palace Library, MS 61, for Bāysunghur ibn Shāh Rukh

*Shāhnāma* (abbreviated as I)

Shiraz, 1430–35? Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ouseley Add. 176, for Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān ibn Shāh Rukh

*Shāhnāma* (abbreviated as M)

Herat, ca. 1440, London, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Morley 239, for Muḥammad Jūkī ibn Shāh Rukh

*Shāhnāma E*

<i>folio(s)</i>	<i>subject</i>
14v (M)	The Fire-Ordeal of Siyāvush
38r (B, I)	A Battle between the Iranians and the Turanians
50r (B, I, M)	Rustam's Last <i>Khvān</i> : He Takes the Liver of the White <i>Dīv</i>
65r (M, I)	The Sleeping Rustam Thrown into the Sea by the <i>Dīv</i> Akvān
151v (I)	Bahrām Gūr Takes the Crown Guarded by Two Lions

*Shāhnāma B*

<i>page(s)</i>	<i>subject</i>
3–4 (I)	A Princely Hunt (double-page)
13 (I, M)	Firdausī and the Poets of Ghazna
31 (I)	Jamshīd Teaches the Crafts
40 (I)	Farīdūn Nails Zahḥāk on Mount Damāvand
62	The Meeting of Zāl and Rūdāba
92	Kay Kā'ūs and the Minstrel- <i>Dīv</i>
101 (E, I, M)	Rustam's Last <i>Khvān</i> : He Takes the Liver of the White <i>Dīv</i>
163 (I, M)	The Murder of Siyāvush
318	The Duel between Gūdarz and Pīrān
319 (?) (I, M)	Rustam Pulls the Khāqān of Chīn from His Elephant
335 (I)	The Hosts of Iran, Led by Rustam, and Turan, Led by Afrāsiyāb, in Battle

357	The Duel between Rustam and Barzū
362	Luhrāsp Receives the News of the Disappearance of Kay Khusrau
393	Isfandiyār's First <i>Khvān</i> : He Slays the Wolves
401 (M)	Isfandiyār Slays Arjāsp in the Brazen Hold
415	Rustam and Isfandiyār Prepare to Duel
429	Farāmurz Mourning at the Coffins of Rustam and Zavāra
469	Gulnār Glimpses Ardashīr
498	Bahrām Gūr Given into the Care of Mundhir the Arab
572	The Game of Chess Brought to Nūshīrvān
604	Bahrām Chubīna and Sāva the Turk in Battle

*Shāhnāma I*

<i>folio(s)</i>	<i>subject</i>
1v–4r ( <i>sic</i> )	Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān Holds Court in a Garden
2r–3v ( <i>sic</i> ) (B)	Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān Hunts (A Battue)
6r–7v	Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān Directs a Battle
15r (B, M)	Firdausī and the Poets of Ghazna
20r	The Court of Gayūmarth, the First King
22r (B)	Jamshīd Teaches the Crafts
24v	Zahḥāk Enthroned
28v	Farīdūn with the Sisters of Jamshīd
30r (B)	Farīdūn Nails Zahḥāk on Mount Damāvand
32v	Farīdūn Trys His Three Sons
35r	Tūr Beheads His Younger Brother, Traj
40r	Manūchihr Enthroned
52r	Zāl, at Manūchihr's Court, Answers the Mubāds' Riddles
62r	Rustam Catches His Horse, Rakhsh
63v	Rustam Lifts Afrāsiyāb from His Saddle
68v	Rustam's Third <i>Khvān</i> : He Kills the Dragon
69r	Rustam's Fourth <i>Khvān</i> : He Lassoos the Witch
70r	Rustam's Sixth <i>Khvān</i> : He Tears off the Head of the <i>Dīv</i> Arzhang
71r (E, B, M)	Rustam's Last <i>Khvān</i> : He Takes the Liver of the White <i>Dīv</i>
73r	Rustam Encounters the King of Mazāndarān in the Form of a Stone Column
81r	Rustam Sleeps after Hunting at the Borders of Turan
82r (M)	Tahmīna Comes to Rustam's Chamber
84r	Suhrāb Captures Hajīr
89v	The Combat of Rustam and Suhrāb
92r (M)	Rustam Slays His Son Suhrāb
99v	Siyāvush Embraced by his Father, Kay Kā'ūs, after His Fire-Ordeal
107r	Siyāvush Displays His Skill at Polo
116r (B, M)	The Murder of Siyāvush
123v	Gīv Finds Kay Khusrau
146r	The Combat of Tūs and Arzhang



*Shāhnāma I (continued)*

<i>folio(s)</i>	<i>subject</i>
156v (M)	Rustam Shoots Ashkabūs and His Horse
164r (B, M)	Rustam Pulls the Khāqān of Chīn from His Elephant
170r	Rustam Wrestles With Pūlādward
172r (E, M)	The Sleeping Rustam Thrown into the Sea by the <i>Dīv</i> Akvān
175r	Rustam Hunts Wild Boars Watched by Girgīn
186r (M)	Rustam Rescues Bīzhan from the Pit
216v (B)	The Hosts of Iran, Led by Rustam, and Turan, Led by Afrāsiyāb, in Battle
232v	Zāl Requests a Patent for His Son, Rustam, from Kay Khusrau
239v–240r	Double-page Composition: Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān Holds Court in a Palace, His Consort on a Balcony with Her Attendants
263v	Isfandiyār's Fifth <i>Khvān</i> : He Kills the Sīmurgh
272v	Rustam Kicks Back Bahman's Rock
280v	Rustam Flees Up the Mountain from Isfandiyār
282v (M)	Rustam Blinds Isfandiyār with the Forked Arrow
309v	Iskandar, Guided by Khizr, in the Land of Darkness
311v	Iskandar and the Talking Tree
337v (M)	Bahrām Gūr Hunts with Āzāda
342r (E)	Bahrām Gūr Takes the Crown Guarded by Two Lions

*Shāhnāma M*

[Robinson's suggestions of illustrations missing or never executed appear in brackets preceded by question-marks]

<i>folio(s)</i>	<i>subject</i>
7r (B, I)	Firdausī and the Poets of Ghazna
?	? [The Court of Gayūmarth]
?	? [Jamshīd Teaches the Crafts]
?	? [The Murder of Īraj]
16v	The Sīmurgh Restores Zāl to His Father, Sām
30v	The Portrait of the Child Rustam Shown to His Grandfather Sām

32v	The Child Rustam Slays the Mad Elephant
?	? [The Enthronement of Kay Kā'ūs]
?	? [Another of Rustam's <i>Khvāns</i> ]
44v (E, B, I)	Rustam's Last <i>Khvān</i> : He Takes the Liver of the White <i>Dīv</i>
56v (I)	Tahmīna Comes to Rustam's Chamber
67v (I)	Rustam Slays His Son Suhrāb
76r	The Fire-Ordeal of Siyāvush
96r (B, I)	The Murder of Siyāvush
119v	Farūd Slays Zarāsp
135r	Ruhhām Attacks the Sorcerer
145v (I)	Rustam Shoots Ashkabūs and His Horse
155v (B, I)	Rustam Pulls the Khāqān of Chīn from His Elephant
165v (E, I)	The Sleeping Rustam Thrown into the Sea by the <i>Dīv</i> Akvān
180v (I)	Rustam Rescues Bīzhan from the Pit
190v	Bīzhan Slays Human
206v	Gustaham Kills Lahhāk and Farshīdward
?	? [Kay Khusrau Crosses the Sea to Makran]
233r	Rustam Directs the Seige of Gang Bihisht
?	? [The Execution of Afrāsiyāb and Garsīvaz by Kay Khusrau]
243r	The Paladins in the Snow
250v	Gushtāsp Kills the Dragon
252r	Gushtāsp Plays Polo before Caesar
269v–270r	The Combat between Isfandiyār and Arjāsp (double-page)
278r (B)	Isfandiyār Slays Arjāsp in the Brazen Hold
291r	The Duel between Rustam and Isfandiyār
296r (I)	Rustam Blinds Isfandiyār with the Forked Arrow
?	? [The Duel between Iskandar and Dārā]
313v	Iskandar Comforts the Dying Dārā
?	? [Iskandar Slays Fūr]
362v (I)	Bahrām Gūr Hunts with Āzāda
?	? [The Enthronement of Shāpur]
?	? [Bahrām Gūr Entertained by the Dihqān]
?	? [Bahrām Gūr Kills the Wolf]
394r	Ruzmīhr Helps Qubād to Escape
430v	The Origin of Chess: The Battle between Gav and Talhand
491v	Bahrām Chubīna Fights on Foot
531r	Yazdigird Hides in the Mill

## APPENDIX B

*Illustrated Timurid Shāhnāma Manuscripts (Preliminary List\*)*

<i>date</i>	<i>library</i>	<i>style</i>	<i>no. of pictures</i>
<b>1. Illustrated <i>Shāhnāma</i> Manuscripts in Illustrated Composite Volumes</b>			
800/1997	Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, P. 114	Shiraz-Iskandar	5
812/1410	Lisbon, Gulbenkian Foundation, L. A. 161	Shiraz-Iskandar	1 of 38
813–14/1410–11	London, British Library, Oriental MS 27261	Shiraz-Iskandar	2 of 20
823/1420	Berlin, Staatliche Museen, J. 4628	Shiraz-Timurid	<u>1 of 29</u>
<b>Total Illustrations in Section 1</b>			<b>9</b>
<b>2. Illustrated Princely <i>Shāhnāma</i> Manuscripts</b>			
833/1430	Tehran, Gulistan Palace Library, MS 61	Herat	21
ca. 1430–35	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ouseley Additional 176	Shiraz	47
ca. 1440	London, Royal Asiatic Society, Morley 239	Herat	<u>31</u>
<b>Total Illustrations in Section 2</b>			<b>99</b>
<b>3. Illustrated Nonprincely <i>Shāhnāma</i> Manuscripts</b>			
831/1427–28	New Delhi, National Museum, 54.60	Shiraz-Timurid (Western India?)	89
ca. 1435	Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 22-1948, and London, British Museum, 1948-10-9-48 to -52	Shiraz-Timurid	31
ca. 1430–40	Manchester, John Rylands Library, Pers. MS. 933	Various: 4 contemp. (3 Saf. copies of Inju pictures; 93 ca. 1600)	100
839–41/1436–37	? (ex Aga Khan; ex-Dufferin and Ava)	Shiraz, post-Ibrāhīm	58
840/1436	Leyden, University Library, Cod. Or. 494	Shiraz, post-Ibrāhīm	19
841/1438	London, British Library, Oriental MS 1403	Provincial: Western India?	93
844/1441	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Sup. pers. 493	Shiraz, post-Ibrāhīm	52
845/1441	Soudavar Collection	Shiraz, post-Ibrāhīm	24
847/1443	Teheran, Gulistan Palace Library, MS 475	Shiraz, post-Ibrāhīm	14
ca. 1440	Washington, DC, Sackler Gallery, S86.0177, 0148-49, 0151	Shiraz, post-Ibrāhīm	4+
848/1444	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Sup. pers., 494; Cleveland, 45.169 and 56.10	Shiraz, post-Ibrāhīm	17 [2] 1
848/1444	? (ex-Kevorkian XXV)	Shiraz, post-Ibrāhīm	14
849/1455	St. Petersburg, Oriental Institute, Academy of Sciences, C1654	Shiraz, post-Ibrāhīm ?	29
850/1446	Fife, Dunimarle, Erskine of Torrie	Provincial: Mazandaran ?	80
855/1451	Istanbul, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, 1945	Yazd, “mixed types”	63
ca. 1450	St. Petersburg, Archives of Academy of Sciences, C. 52	Shiraz, post-Ibrāhīm ?	31
ca. 1450	Manchester, John Rylands Library, Pers. MS 9	Shiraz, post-Ibrāhīm and Turkman	42
ca. 1450	Munich, Staatliches Museum für Volkerkunde (Preetorius, 77-11-281)	Shiraz (?)	1 (single folio)
ca. 1450	? (ex-Kevorkian XIX)	Herat?	33
1425–50	Dispersed MS: 12, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 20.120.238–249; 2, London, British Library, 1948-12-11-04 and Boston Museum of Fine Arts 14.544; 2, Fogg 19.137 and 47.1954; 1 each Sackler Gallery, S86.0144-0146; Keir, III.202; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, M85.189; others presently unrecorded	Western India?	28+
ca. 1450	London, British Library, Oriental MS 4384	?	9
ca. 1450	Dispersed MS: 2, London, India Office Library, Add Or. 210; 2, Private Collection; 1, Minneapolis	Shiraz? Western India	13+



<i>date</i>	<i>library</i>	<i>style</i>	<i>no. of pictures</i>
	IA, 51.37.20; 5 ex-Kevorkian and MS (sold Sotheby's 4/7/85, Lot 186); 1 Sackler Gallery, S86.0154; 2 Chicago AI, 41 2.1975; more said to be in Ashmolean Museum		
ca. 1450-60	Bombay, Hakim Collection	Shiraz, post-Ibrāhīm (ca. 60) and Turkman (40)	103
ca. 1450-60	Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Museum of Art, 1963.1.52/69	Herat-Turkman	33
859/1455	? (ex-Kevorkian LX)	Provincial	7
861/1457	Geneva, Sadruddin Aga Khan, MS 11 (ex-Teignmouth; ex-Kevorkian XXVIII)	Shiraz, post-Ibrāhīm (most) and some Turkman	54
ca. 1460-70	St. Petersburg, Public Library, 332	Turkman	10 (+4 later)
ca. 1475	Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, II, III, 3	Turkman?	9
878/1473	? (ex-Kevorkian LV)	Provincial	59
885/1480	Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, P. 157	Turkman?	30
885/1480	Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, P. 158	Turkman?	27
890/1485	London, Private Collection [with spurious dedication to Timur] (ex-Kevorkian XXXIV)	Turkman?	70
891/1486	London, British Library, Additional MS 18188	Turkman?	72
890-91/1485-86	London, Nour Collection (ex-Jeuniette)	Turkman?	43
ca. 1490	? (ex-Riefstahl)	Turkman?	?
ca. 1490	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Sup. pers. 1280	Turkman	24
ca. 1490	Munich, Staatliches Museum für Volkerkunde (Pretorius, 77-11-280, 77-11-456)	Turkman	2
895/1489	Berlin, Staatsbibliothek	Turkman	87
895/1490	Istanbul, University Library, 7955/311	Turkman?	?
895/1490	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Pers. 228	Turkman?	11
899/1494	?	Turkman?	11
899/1494	Istanbul, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, 1978 University Library, F.1406, and many dispersed	Turkman?	ca. 350+
late 15th	St. Petersburg, Oriental Institute of the Academy of Sciences, C. 822	Provincial ?	74
late 15th	Dispersed MS: 29 Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 14.552+; 2 Rhode Island School of Design, 17.403, 17.398; 1 Worcester, 1935.30; 3 Sackler Gallery, S86.0469, 0135, 0139; at least 3 others	Provincial ?	38+
901/1496	Madrid, Public Library, II.3.218	Turkman?	73
902/1496	Munich, Staatsbibliothek, Aumer 8	Turkman?	?
902/1497	? (ex-Kevorkian XLIII)	Turkman?	44
902-9/1497-1504	? destroyed? (ex-Schulz)	Turkman?	?
<b>Total Illustrations in Section 3</b>			<b>2052</b>

#### 4. Three among Many Single Folios from Dispersed MSs Not Yet Added to Other Reconstructed MS Counts

Fraad and Ettinghausen, 1971, pp. 51-52	12
Vever, 1988, p. 83	1
Nour Collection (as yet unpublished)	3
<b>Total Illustrations in Section 4</b>	<b>16</b>

**Grand Total of *Shāhnāma* Illustrations in Sections 1-4** **2176**

\*This listing represents only the most accessible (or accessibly published) manuscripts and miniatures, omitting most single *Shāhnāma* miniatures that cannot yet be linked with specific dispersed manuscripts, as well as many pictures that have passed through major auction houses and are mentioned only briefly in sales catalogues.

# THE ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE VASE: ITS ORIGINS AND HISTORY TO THE EARLY TWELFTH CENTURY

By GEORGE T. BEECH

THROUGH ITS ASSOCIATIONS WITH SEVERAL FAMOUS people of the twelfth century, the so-called Eleanor of Aquitaine vase of the Louvre (fig. 1) is one of the most celebrated rock crystal vases to survive from earlier times. Within three short decades of that century it passed through the hands of Duke William IX of Aquitaine, the first troubadour poet; Eleanor of Aquitaine; King Louis VII of France; and the abbot Suger of Saint-Denis. Yet curiously enough, its origins are obscure and have been little investigated, in part because historians could not identify its earliest known owner, a certain Mitadolus, who is named in an inscription (fig. 2) in the mounting added to the vase in France in the mid-twelfth century. But even more importantly, art historians have not been able to determine when and where it was made, not to mention how it came to belong to the ducal family of Aquitaine in the early 1100s. As revealed below, the identity of Mitadolus is now clear, demonstrating that the vase was owned by the last Muslim king of Saragossa in northeastern Spain prior to its acquisition by William the Troubadour.

But this knowledge is of little help in ascertaining the place and date of origin of the vase. The absence of other known and dated vessels to which this one is closely comparable hampers the investigation of its origins and in effect rules out any unassailable attribution. Nonetheless, certain traits of the vase make it possible to surmise where and when it was made more accurately than earlier scholars did. The purpose of this article is to argue that the vase was probably made in Iran during the Sassanian period (A.D. 249–651). In addition, I will briefly examine the circumstances in which this Middle Eastern *objet d'art* made its way first to Muslim Spain and then to southern France in the early twelfth century, prior to its entry into the treasury of Saint-Denis in the 1140s.

This inquiry is complicated by the fact that art historians disagree about the origins of the vase. H. Barbet de Jouy (1865), Henry Havard (1896), and E. Molinier (1901) referred to it vaguely as an “antique,” with no further precision as to date or

place of origin.<sup>1</sup> W. Martin Conway (1915) was almost as vague, venturing that “it may be antique or it may be Fatimite work of the 10th or 11th century.”<sup>2</sup> He was the first to conjecture that it might be Egyptian. C. J. Lamm (1930) studied the Eleanor vase more closely than anyone else for his comprehensive survey of medieval Near Eastern glassware and carved hardstone, including over a hundred objects from the Fatimid period in Egypt (969–1171).<sup>3</sup> From his findings the following general picture emerges. During this period Muslim artists produced a large quantity of some of the most celebrated vases known from the entire medieval period. Many of these pieces survive in museums and church treasuries in Constantinople, Venice, Spain, southwestern France, and Germany. Contemporaries in the tenth to twelfth centuries ascribed enormous value to these objects, most of which were vessels—mainly water pitchers or ewers. To judge from a number of well-documented cases of donations to favored churches and monastic houses, European kings and princes were particularly fascinated by these vases and must have gone to great lengths to obtain them.<sup>4</sup> They stood out through their translucent purity and clarity—qualities much admired then—and through the elegance of their figured decoration. Contemporaries, Christian and Muslim alike, also valued rock crystal for the supernatural healing powers they attributed to it, as demonstrated by passages in numerous lapidaries.<sup>5</sup> Churchmen like Suger, who bought or received them as gifts, regularly converted them into liturgical vessels or reliquaries for their most cherished relics—and thus a number have survived to the present. The absence of any indigenous rock crystal carving industry in western Europe before the end of the twelfth century only whetted the European appetite for these vases.<sup>6</sup>

Lamm explicitly rejected the earlier view that the Eleanor vase might itself be Fatimid Egyptian, preferring to describe it as “probably late antique Egyptian, 4th or 5th centuries.”<sup>7</sup> He did not, however, give any reason for this tentative change of attribution. He apparently knew of no other





FIG. 1. Eleanor of Aquitaine vase. Rock crystal. Diameter: 33.7 cm. Paris, Louvre. Photo: author.

Egyptian vase from that period to which the Eleanor vase was closely comparable; hence his view was a hypothesis only. Despite Lamm's preference, Peter Lasko (1972) pronounced the vase to be "probably fatimid 10th–11th century."<sup>8</sup> For a number of years Daniel Alcouffe of the Louvre held it to be simply Muslim, from the ninth or tenth century, but he now favors the belief that it is Sassanian Persian.<sup>9</sup> Most recently, Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, in her notice on the vase written for the 1991 Louvre exhibit of *Le Tresor de Saint-Denis*, suggested an Iranian origin for it, either Sassanian or early in the Islamic period (ninth or tenth century).<sup>10</sup>

Thus, opinions have varied considerably as to the vase's origins, though it seems likely that several of the art historians just mentioned have simply repeated the views of earlier scholars. In fact, to judge from the length and detail of their written accounts, only two writers seem to have studied the vase intensively. One of these, Gaborit, was concerned mainly with the mounting and only to a lesser degree with the vase itself. The other, Lamm, offered no evidence to support either his attribution to Egypt or to late antiquity. Nor, for that matter, have those who favor the Fatimid hypothesis given any arguments to support their views. In effect, the Eleanor vase has received little close scrutiny.

### *The Origins of the Vase Reexamined*

Its medium alone puts limits on the possible origins of the Eleanor vase since rock crystal objects are known to have been produced in only a few places in antiquity and the early Middle

Ages. The Egyptians were the first to fashion rock crystal containers early in the second millennium B.C., and Egypt remained an important center of production through the Hellenistic into the Roman period.<sup>11</sup> After a possible decline in the Byzantine period, Egyptian production resumed in pre-Fatimid times, in the eighth and ninth centuries, as studies by Kurt Erdmann have shown, and then reached its zenith in the tenth and early eleventh centuries.<sup>12</sup> The upsurge in Egyptian production in the tenth century may have been related to an increased availability of rock crystal at that time.<sup>13</sup> Persia became a second major producer as early as the eighth century B.C., and the technique survived the fall of the Achaemenid empire in the fourth century.<sup>14</sup> Persians continued to carve rock crystal in the Parthian and especially in the Sassanian period. For the period of antiquity as a whole, production of rock crystal vessels reached a high point during imperial Roman times, but the most recent study of the subject sheds no light on the location of workshops or artistic centers other than those in Egypt and Persia.<sup>15</sup> The Roman interest in rock crystal seems to have survived into the Byzantine empire, although only to a limited degree, according to one recent scholar.<sup>16</sup> As mentioned earlier, the carving of rock crystal was unknown in western Europe until the late twelfth century. Thus, from what art historians know at the present about the production of rock crystal vessels in the ancient and early medieval periods, Egypt, Iran, and Byzantium stand out as the most likely places of origin for the Eleanor vase.

In theory, size and shape should provide another important criterion for identifying the Eleanor vase. Yet pear-shaped vessels similar to it are



FIG. 2. Eleanor of Aquitaine vase (detail). Inscription in mounting added by Suger, Abbot of Saint-Denis, in 1140s. Photo: author.



found in all the countries and periods mentioned above.<sup>17</sup> Thus, from the perspective of shape the Eleanor vase could have come from Hellenistic or Roman Egypt, from Iran, or from early medieval Byzantium.

A third element, decoration, offers still another criterion for identification, which proves to be of considerable importance for the Eleanor vase. The entire visible exterior of the vase (the base and the top are hidden by the mounting) is covered with carved concave circles, or facets, often known as honeycomb faceting. According to Andrew Oliver, Jr., glassmakers first began to use decorative faceting in Roman Egypt in the first century A.D.<sup>18</sup> Thereafter it became relatively common in the decoration of Roman glassware, although it is not clear that carvers transferred the technique from glass to rock crystal vessels in Roman times.<sup>19</sup> A faceted glass paten of the tenth century in the treasury of San Marco in Venice shows that this form of decoration was applied in early medieval Byzantium, though this seems to be the only known example.<sup>20</sup> Egypt was the second and most important region for the working of rock crystal in early medieval times, and here the situation is surprising. Not one faceted vessel appears to survive from Fatimid Egypt, even though this was the period when Egypt produced its greatest number and highest quality of rock crystal objects.<sup>21</sup> Lamm seems to have recognized this in 1930. Although he does not say so explicitly, I believe he tentatively described the Eleanor vase as late antique Egyptian because he realized that Fatimid artists did not engage in faceting.

In sharp contrast to Egyptian tastes, Iranian artists of the Sassanian period had a decided preference for honeycomb faceting (figs. 3–7), which they used more often than any other form of decoration.<sup>22</sup> One recent study classifies Sassanian faceting into three different types, among which the one called “concave circular” found more widespread use than the others.<sup>23</sup> A distinguishing feature of this type is that relatively small, contiguous facets cover the entire surface of the bowl or vase, as opposed to other types in which the facets are larger, separated from one another, and extend over only a part of the vessel. The Eleanor vase closely resembles the Sassanian examples with concave circular facets illustrated in figures 3–7, except that its contiguous circular or oval facets are smaller and hence more numerous.<sup>24</sup> But it differs from all of them in that they



FIG. 3. Rhyton, amphora shaped. Glass. Iranian, third/fourth century A.D. Height 33.1 cm, diameter 11.2 cm. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1964 (64.60.1).

are made of glass, not of rock crystal. No faceted rock crystal vase with which the Eleanor vase may be compared appears to have survived from the Sassanian period; hence, if it comes from Iran at that time, it is the only one of its kind known. Yet this need not preclude a Sassanian attribution, for specialists commonly treat the decoration of glass and of hardstone vessels as applications of the same technique to two different yet closely related media.<sup>25</sup> If artists normally decorated glass vessels in this way, it is also likely that they would have treated rock crystal in the same manner, even though no examples have survived to bear out this assumption. Finally, since Fukai maintains that concave circular faceting declined during the early Islamic period in Iran, the Eleanor vase, if Iranian, most likely dates from the Sassanian period and not much later.<sup>26</sup>



FIG. 4. Glass bowl with circular facets.  
Iranian, third to seventh centuries. Height 8.1 cm,  
diameter 11.4 cm. Kyoto, Japan, private collection.  
From Shinji Fukai, *Persian Glass*, trans. Edna B. Crawford  
(New York: Weatherhill/Tankosha, 1977), pl. 1, with  
permission of the publisher.



FIG. 5. Glass bowl with circular facets.  
Iranian, third to seventh centuries.  
Height 8.4 cm, diameter 9.8 cm.  
Tokyo, private collection. From Fukai, *Persian Glass*,  
pl. 4, with permission of the publisher.



FIG. 6. Glass vase with facets.  
Iranian, third to seventh centuries. Height 19.4 cm.  
Tokyo, private collection. From Fukai, *Persian Glass*,  
pl. 30, with permission of the publisher.



FIG. 7. Stemmed glass goblet with facets. Iranian, fifth to  
seventh centuries. Height 16.7 cm, diameter 10.5 cm.  
Tokyo, private collection. From Fukai, *Persian Glass*,  
pl. 20, with permission of the publisher.



This brief survey leads to several tentative conclusions about the origins of the Eleanor vase. It appears to be unique; that is, no other pear-shaped rock crystal vessel with honeycomb faceting seems to have survived for comparison. Although this complicates identifying the vase, it does not mean that the task is hopeless. Lamm was correct in rejecting an attribution to Fatimid Egypt, but his assignment of the vase to the same country in late Roman and early medieval times is doubtful given the lack of other faceted vessels of this provenance. Early medieval Byzantium also remains a possibility, but only a distant one, for the same reason. The very popularity of faceting in Sassanian Iran obviously leaves it as the most likely time and place of origin for the Eleanor vase.

### *The Function of the Vase*

Whether the artist intended this piece to serve a specific function or to be purely decorative is a matter of conjecture. Lacking a handle, it would not have been a pitcher but could have been a container or drinking vessel, though objects of great value like this would probably not have been intended for everyday use. In any case the metal mounting added in the twelfth century obstructs the view today and leaves some uncertainty about its original shape. My own examination, through photos in 1990 and 1991, persuaded me that Suger had his workmen cut away the top but not the base in order to fit his mounting.<sup>27</sup> In all probability the vase rested on a small base, which flared out slightly at the bottom and is still essentially intact today, though hidden by the top metallic band of the mounting.<sup>28</sup> When first carved, the top of the vase could have ended in a simple narrow opening, or it could have flared slightly outward, as does the base. In the latter case, Suger would have designed the mounting to reproduce the original shape of the vase, though now with a much elongated neck.

How the Saragossan king, ʿImād al-dawla, viewed the vase is unknown since, unlike Suger, he left no inscription. Nonetheless, is it worth mentioning that, though vessels of this kind can never have been common, Spanish Arabic love poetry of the eleventh century had three different words for wine cups made of rock crystal.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps the Eleanor vase was one of these. However this may have been, the abbot Suger of Saint-Denis leaves

no doubt about his perception of the vase when he acquired it in the 1140s. He twice called it a *vas* (a generic term for containers in classical and medieval Latin), first in the brief inscription on the vase itself. Then in a more detailed description in his treatise, *De Administratione*, he elaborates, probably in order to give his readers a clearer idea of its shape: “another *vas*, similar to a *justa* of beryl or crystal.”<sup>30</sup> *Justa* in medieval Latin, *jouste* in Old French, and *juste* in Middle English referred both to a liquid measure—a “just” measure of wine in the case of monastic consumption—and to a container or drinking vessel, as is the case here.<sup>31</sup>

In contrast to other European contemporaries who acquired Near Eastern rock crystal vessels and left them in their pristine state, Suger transformed his vase by adding the metal mounting decorated with gems. Almost certainly he did this in order to make the vase suitable, as he saw it, “for the libations of the Holy Table,” that is, for communion.<sup>32</sup> In this capacity the Eleanor vase may have graced the altar of Saint-Denis on festive occasions in the presence of the king and other dignitaries, but eventually it became what it has since remained—a museum piece. Thus, in the course of time this vase not only passed through many hands but was also used for strikingly different purposes.

### *The Passage to Western Europe*

Wherever and whenever it was made in the Near East, the Eleanor vase was somehow taken to western Europe, where it turned up in the family of the dukes of Aquitaine in the early twelfth century. How William IX then acquired it was unknown until the recent identification of Mitadulus, the title of its earliest known owner.<sup>33</sup> Mitadulus, or ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Hud ʿImād al-dawla (1110–30), was the Muslim king of Saragossa in northeastern Spain, the last representative of his Hudid dynasty before the Christian Reconquest. This meant that the vase had first come to Spain before passing into France, most likely as part of the well-known trade that linked Muslim Spain with the Islamic Near East at that time.<sup>34</sup> In fact, the precise occasion for the transfer of the vase may be known. A contemporary Arab chronicler, al-Makrīzī, left a detailed account of the looting of a famed collection of treasured rock crystal vessels belonging to the

Fatimid ruler of Cairo, al-Mustansir, during a time of inflation and shortage between 1061 and 1069. Citing from a now lost work called the *Book of Treasurers and Rarities*, al-Makrīzī tells how enormous numbers of these vases were dispersed and sold for huge sums of money.<sup>35</sup> Two of them reached the treasury of San Marco in Venice, where they survive today.<sup>36</sup> The Eleanor of Aquitaine vase, though most likely not of Egyptian origin, may well have been incorporated into that treasure through the collecting propensities of earlier Fatimid rulers and thus, after the looting of 1061, have been put into the Spanish market, whence the Huidid kings of Spain bought it.

Although there may be no records of individual transactions between the Islamic Near East and Muslim Spain involving rock crystal vessels,<sup>37</sup> Lamm's survey reveals that several of the Egyptian pieces he studied are located today in church treasuries in Spain.<sup>38</sup> The Spanish Christian crusaders presumably "liberated" these objects from their defeated opponents during the Reconquista and subsequently donated them to churchmen, who then converted them into ecclesiastical vessels exactly as Suger did with the Eleanor vase.

Yet Egypt was not the only conceivable route for the passage of the vase to Spain. It is now well known that Sassanian art exerted widespread influence in both the Islamic and western European spheres during the Middle Ages. Traces of borrowings from Sassanian artists have been found in France and Spain in such widely varied fields as architectural design in Romanesque churches, iconographic themes in sculptural motifs and illuminated manuscripts, textiles, ceramics, and ivory carving.<sup>39</sup> The vase could have come to Spain in the hands of a Spanish Muslim who had purchased it directly in Iran as an example of an art form highly admired in his home country. In the final analysis, though, the exact itinerary of the vase to Spain, whether directly or via Fatimid Egypt, is of less importance than the fact that it provides a new instance of the transmission of Sassanian *objets d'art* to the Islamic world in the West.

The identification of Mitadolus as ʿImād al-dawla of Saragossa also clarifies the circumstances surrounding the transfer of the vase from his hands to those of William the Troubadour, who, contrary to all expectations, did not seize it as booty from his defeated enemy. Instead, ʿImād al-dawla almost certainly bestowed it as a gift upon the Aquitanian prince, with whom he fought as

an ally at one of the great and decisive battles of the Reconquest, the battle of Cutanda in southern Aragon on June 17, 1120. In that battle the North African Almoravids were defeated in their attempt to recapture Saragossa from their Christian foes. Recently discovered Arab sources reveal that ʿImād al-dawla of Saragossa did not vanish from the scene, as previously thought, when the Almoravids forced him to abandon his capital after a brief five-month reign in 1110.<sup>40</sup> Rather, he chose to ally himself with Christian Aragonese invaders in order to avoid submitting to the yoke of the hated Muslim Almoravids. In this capacity he fought the Almoravids under the command of Alfonso I of Aragon at Cutanda in 1120, as did Duke William of Aquitaine.<sup>41</sup> The vase, which presumably changed hands as a result of this acquaintance, thus became a symbol of an unusual instance of Christian-Muslim collaboration during the wars of the Reconquest.

When Abbot Suger acquired the Eleanor vase in the 1140s, it became one of the most highly prized objects of his newly assembled abbey treasury, and he commissioned his goldsmiths to mount it in gold, silver, and precious jewels. He then had them carve into the base an inscription in verse, which he himself composed and which lists the four previous owners of the vase.<sup>42</sup>

Hoc vas sponsa dedit Aanor regi Ludovico, Mitadolus  
avo, mihi rex, Sanctisque Sugeris

[As a bride, Eleanor gave this vase to King Louis, Mitadolus to her grandfather, the King to me, and Suger to the Saints.]

This list has made it possible not only to know that its first owner in the West was ʿImād al-dawla of Saragossa but also to reconstruct the history of the vase from his day to that of Suger. After Cutanda, William IX took the vase back to his capital in Poitiers and then bequeathed it, possibly as a baptismal gift, to his granddaughter Eleanor, born in 1122 or 1124. When Eleanor gave it to her husband Louis VII of France as a wedding gift in 1137, it came to symbolize the short-lived unification of the Duchy of Aquitaine with the French crown. Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis, the spiritual advisor of the French king as well as regent during his absence on the 1147 crusade, persuaded Louis to give it to him for the abbey treasury during the decade of the 1140s, probably anticipating the dissolution of the royal marriage



with Eleanor of Aquitaine. The vase then became a centerpiece for that most famous of medieval church treasuries and is one of a handful of objects to survive from it today.

The passage of the vase from Islamic Spain to France in 1120 was no more an isolated phenomenon than its earlier movement from the Near East to Saragossa. On the contrary, the century from 1050 to 1150, the period of the intensification of the Reconquest, witnessed the movement of a wide variety of Spanish Islamic economic and cultural influences across the Pyrenees into southwestern France. Modern finds of Islamic coins in that part of the country testify to the existence of trading contacts between the two peoples.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, the incorporation of a number of elements of Spanish Islamic architectural design and motifs of decoration into southwestern French Romanesque churches built between 1050 and 1150 suggests that French architects borrowed significantly from their Muslim predecessors.<sup>44</sup> In at least four instances Romanesque builders copied Arabic inscriptions in the Kufic script into parts of their buildings.<sup>45</sup> Cultural borrowing extended also to the realm of ideas: historians have long recognized the significant contribution of Spanish Islamic scientific ideas to the twelfth-century European Renaissance of learning.<sup>46</sup> Modern Islamicists also claim that the vernacular poetry of the troubadours, which first appears in southwestern France at the beginning of the twelfth century, has its roots in Spanish Arabic love poetry of the tenth and eleventh centuries, though Romance scholars deny any such link and the issue remains in dispute.<sup>47</sup>

Nonetheless, the overall French admiration for, and appropriation of, Spanish Islamic art, artifacts, and ideas in the period 1050–1150 is beyond any doubt. The transferal of the Eleanor vase from Spanish to Aquitanian hands in 1120 furnishes a new example of just this sort of borrowing in still another of the arts—that of hardstone carving. It also raises the question of whether this exchange could have had any broader cultural consequences beyond the immediate circles of those who came to possess the vase after it settled in France. Late in the twelfth century, schools of hardstone carving began to thrive at several centers in western Europe, including Paris, after having been unknown there in the earlier Middle Ages. Could this foreign vase have had any influence on the artists who established those schools? Though one must be skeptical about the

impact of any single art object, particularly one confined to a church treasury, it must also be remembered that Suger attached great value to this vase and periodically put it on display. Given the fame and prominent location of Saint-Denis, it is quite conceivable that many people, including artists, had occasion to see it.

William IX's importation of this vase is not the only known instance of twelfth-century Frenchmen acquiring rock crystal art objects. Lamm's inventory records at least ten rock crystal pieces of Fatimid Egyptian origin, mainly in French parish churches, where they had already been converted into liturgical vessels and reliquaries in medieval times.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, five of the ten were in Aquitaine, and this concentration is striking. In contrast to the Eleanor vase, however, the precise circumstances surrounding the acquisition and importation of these objects into France are all unknown, as are the names of their acquirers and their dates. Similar uncertainties also hamper the efforts of art historians to date, localize, and name those responsible for the borrowings from Islamic Spain mentioned earlier in architecture, sculpture, trade, and ideas. This fact only serves to emphasize more forcefully the exceptional good fortune of knowing, in the case of the Eleanor vase, not only the general circumstances surrounding the exchange but also the identities of the principals involved in it and its precise place and date. Knowledge of these strongly suggests that the other foreign rock crystal pieces located in Aquitaine today were acquired by other Aquitanian noblemen who, like William IX, were fascinated by them and took pains to bring them home after either crusading in the Near East or participating in the Reconquest in Spain.

Only further research can determine whether the importation of a small number of rock crystal objects like the Eleanor vase had any appreciable impact on the late twelfth-century development of indigenous European workshops in hardstone carving.<sup>49</sup> But ignorance on this point hardly detracts from the inherent interest of the Eleanor vase itself. Few rock crystal vases have had such a distinguished list of owners in the distant past, and rarely has it been possible to identify with precision both holders and occasions for transfer during one brief period of time. These facts alone could well justify the efforts made here to learn more about the origins of the vase.

## Notes

1. H. Barbet de Jouy, *Les gemmes et bijoux de la couronne . . . dessinés et gravés . . . par Jules Jacquemart*, Musée Impérial du Louvre (Paris: Chalcographie des Musées Impériaux, 1865), pl. 7; H. Havard, *Histoire de l'orfèvrerie française* (Paris: Quantin, 1896), 116; Emile Molinier, *Histoire générale des arts appliqués à l'industrie*, vol. 4, *l'Orfèvrerie industrielle et civile* (Paris: E. Levy et compagnie, 1901), 168.
2. W. Martin Conway, "The Abbey of St. Denis and Its Ancient Treasures," *Archaeologia*, 2nd ser., 45 (1915): 142.
3. *Mittelalterliche Gläser und Steinschnittarbeiten aus dem Nahen Osten* (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1930), 1:187; 2:pl. 64.
4. Lamm, *Mittelalterliche Gläser*, 1:179–86.
5. Lamm, *Mittelalterliche Gläser*, 1:186; 2:508–9; Joan Evans and Mary Sarjeantson, *English Medieval Lapidaries*, Early English Text Society 190 (1933), passim; Marbode of Rennes, *De Lapidibus*, ed. John M. Riddle, *Sudhofs Archiv: Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, Supplement 20 (Wiesbaden, 1977), 114–15. Theophilus, *The Various Arts*, ed. C. R. Dodwell (London: T. Nelson, 1961), 168–71; P. Kahle, "Bergkristall, Glass, und Glassflüsse nach dem Steinbuch von El-Beruni," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 15 (1936): 325–43.
6. H. Hahnloser and S. Brugger-Koch, *Corpus der Hartsteinschliffe des 12.–15. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaften, 1985) treat the development of European hardstone carving in the later Middle Ages.
7. Lamm, *Mittelalterliche Gläser*, 1:187.
8. Peter Lasko, *Ars Sacra 800–1200*, The Pelican History of Art (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972), 227, 307 n. 9.
9. The Muslim attribution appears in a brochure available at the museum today. Daniel Alcouffe, *La galerie d'Apollon* (Paris: Musée du Louvre, Département des objets d'arts, n. d.), 5. He expressed his preference for a Sassanian origin in a conversation in the summer of 1991.
10. "Le vase d'Aliénor," *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis: Musée du Louvre, Paris, 12 mars–17 juin 1991* (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 1991), 168–72.
11. Andrew Oliver, Jr., "Rock Crystal Vessels in Antiquity," *Muse* 7 (1973): 29–35.
12. Kurt Erdmann, "Fatimid Rock Crystal," *Oriental Art* 3 (1951): 142–46; "Neue Islamische Bergkristalle," *Ars Orientalis* 3 (1959): 210–15. See also R. H. Pinder-Wilson, "Some Rock Crystals of the Islamic Period," *British Museum Quarterly* 19 (1954): 84–87, and most recently, Daniel Alcouffe, "Islamic Hardstone Carving," *The Treasury of San Marco Venice*, ed. David Buckton (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984), 207–8.
13. In "The Swahili Corridor," *The Scientific American* (Sept. 1987), 86–93, Mark Horton describes the trade of merchants of the East Coast of Africa who obtained large quantities of high-quality rock crystal from new sources, probably in Ethiopia, and traded it to the Fatimids at that time. I am grateful to Remi Constable for this reference.
14. Oliver, "Rock Crystal Vessels," 29–30.
15. Oliver, "Rock Crystal Vessels," 29–30.
16. Daniel Alcouffe, "Classical, Byzantine and Western Hardstone Carving," *Treasury of San Marco*, 75. On Byzantine rock crystal see J. Philippe, "Le cristal de roche et la question Byzantine," *XXVI Corso di Cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina, Ravenna 6/18 Maggio, 1979* (Ravenna: Edizioni del Girasole, 1981), 227–47.
17. For examples of pear-shaped vessels of Byzantine and Sassanian origin see Philippe, "Le cristal," 91–95; and Marilyn Jenkins, *Islamic Art in the Kuwait National Museum* (London: Sotheby, 1983), 37. For some of Roman origin see Oliver, "Rock Crystal Vessels," 32–33; for others of ancient Egyptian origin, Oliver, 29–30; and for some of Fatimid Egyptian origin, Lamm, *Mittelalterliche Gläser*, 1:192–98 and 2:pl. 67.
18. Andrew Oliver, Jr., "Early Roman Facetted Glass," *Journal of Glass Studies* (1984), 35–58.
19. Oliver, "Rock Crystal Vessels," makes no reference to faceting in his survey of Roman rock crystal vessels.
20. Alcouffe, *Treasury of San Marco*, 195–96. Philippe makes no reference to Byzantine faceting in "Le cristal."
21. This is based on a survey of Lamm, *Mittelalterliche Gläser*, and the articles of K. Erdmann cited in n. 12. In 1951 Erdmann cautiously expressed the view that the faceted vessels in Lamm's work were not of oriental origin. "Fatimid Rock Crystal," 142 n. 3.



22. Roman Ghirshman, *Persian Art: The Parthian and Sassanian Dynasties, 249 B.C.– 651 A.D.* (New York: Golden Press, 1961), 239, 332, 400; Axel von Saldern, "Achaemenid and Sassanian Cut Glass," *Ars Orientalis* 5 (1963): 10–12, pl. 3, fig. 6; Prudence Oliver Harper, *The Royal Hunter: Art of the Sassanian Empire* (New York: Asia Society, 1978), 153, 155, 159; R. Charleston, "Glass," in *The Arts of Persia*, ed. R. W. Ferrier (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 296; and above all, Shinji Fukai, *Persian Glass*, trans. Edna B. Crawford (New York: Weatherhill/Tankosha, 1977), 21–61.
23. Fukai, *Persian Glass*, 32–33.
24. Other examples include von Saldern, "Achaemenid," pl. 3, fig. 6, and Ghirshman, *Persian Art*, 332, no. 443 C. By way of comparison, the Eleanor vase, at its maximum circumference, has approximately 50 facets per row (it has 22 to 23 rows in all), as opposed to 23 per row in a similar bowl cited by Fukai, *Persian Glass*, 34, table 1. In her 1991 catalogue description of the Eleanor vase, Danielle Gaborit likens it to a Sassanian jasper vase from the Prado in Madrid, which, however, has many fewer, larger hexagonal facets over just a portion of its entire surface. "Vase d'Aliénor," 168.
25. "As mentioned earlier, glass cutting techniques evolved from those used for cutting vessels of stone such as rock crystal." Fukai, *Persian Glass*, 44.
26. Fukai, *Persian Glass*, 37.
27. The mounting is open at both the top and bottom, permitting a partial view of the interior and of both extremities of the vase. At the top the rock crystal has been sheered off at the level of the top of the first, or lowest, of the metal bands encircling it. Thus only a small segment of the body of the vase, perhaps a centimeter, is concealed from view by the mounting. The same is true for the bottom of the vase.
28. As seen through both the top and the bottom today, the rock crystal base inside the mounting is badly broken in several places, with one small segment missing. This does not alter the impression that, aside from this damage, most of the original base remains in place. Small, slightly outward-flaring bases identical to this are found frequently on rock crystal vases of the early medieval period: for example, Lamm, *Mittelalterliche Gläser*, pl. 64, nos. 6, 7, 8, 11, 13.
29. H. Peres, *La poésie andalouse en arabe classique au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1953), 370.
30. "Vas quoque aliud, quod instar justae berilli aut cristalli videtur, cum in primo itinere Aquitaniae regina noviter desponsata domino regi Ludovico dedisset, pro magno amoris munere nobis rex, nos vero sanctis Martyribus dominis nostris ad libandum divinae mensae affectuosissime contulimus. Cujus donationis seriem in eodem vase, gemmis auroque ornato, versiculis quibusdam intitulavimus:  

Hoc vas sponsa dedit Aanor regi Ludovico, Mitadulus avo, mihi res, Sanctisque Sugerus."  
 E. Panofsky, *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis and Its Art Treasures*, 2nd ed. by G. Panofsky-Soergel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 77–78.
31. Du Cange, *Glossarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis*; J. F. Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* (Leiden: Brill, 1964); *Middle English Dictionary* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968), 1:1. A Middle English medical text cited here describes a *juste* as a vessel with a long narrow neck and large bottom, precisely the shape of the Eleanor vase.
32. For the Latin text see n. 30 above. That this was the purpose of the mounting is confirmed by his similar treatment of two other unmounted vases that came into his possession at this time: a vase and a water pitcher, both of sardonix and both of which he incorporated into the abbey treasury. *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, no. 28, 173–76 and no. 29, 177–81. The one he thereby converted into a chalice, the other was to serve for "offering libations to the Lord." But Suger does not say precisely how he intended the Eleanor vase to be used at the altar, though it was obviously not a chalice. Despite having a cover (missing today), it could have been used as a pouring vessel.
33. For what follows, on the passage of the vase from the Middle East to Spain and on its history from 1120 to the 1140s, see G. Beech, "The Eleanor of Aquitaine Vase, William IX, and Muslim Spain," *Gesta* (forthcoming).
34. Thomas F. Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 130–32.
35. Paul Kahle, "Die Schätze der Fatimiden," *Zeitschrift der deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, n. s., 14 (1935): 332 and 344.
36. Daniel Alcouffe, "Art islamique," in *Le Trésor de Saint-Marc de Venise* (Milan: Olivetti, 1984), 207, 216–27.
37. One of the letters of the tenth-century Spanish Jew, Hasday, who served the Caliph Abd al-Rahman III (912–61), speaks about the trade that

- brought luxury goods, including "precious stones," from Egypt to his country in his own day: "nous voyons les marchands arriver en foule dans notre pays [i.e., Spain] des pays étrangers et des îles, et en particulier d'Égypte et des pays encore plus lointains; ils apportent des parfums, des pierres précieuses, et autres objets de prix à l'usage des princes et des grands, et en générale tous les produits d'Égypte dont on a besoin chez nous"; cited in E. Carmoly, *Itinéraires de la Terre Sainte des XIII<sup>e</sup>, XIV<sup>e</sup>, XV<sup>e</sup>, XVI<sup>e</sup>, XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles traduits de l'Hébreu* (Bruxelles: A. Vandale, 1847), 36.
38. Lamm, *Mittelalterliche Gläser*, 2:pl. 67, no. 11; early eleventh-century Egyptian bottle at the cathedral of Astorga, Leon, no. 9, 196; late eleventh-century Egyptian rock crystal vase purchased in Spain in 1880, today in the British Museum. Table 76, nos. 2–6, 214–16, rock crystal chessmen from Egypt, tenth century, in churches in Catalonia and Rioja.
  39. Ghirshman, *Persian Art*, 290, 294–95, 301, 303, 305, 307, 310–15.
  40. Some previously unknown sections of the *Kitāb al-Bayan al-Mugrib* of the thirteenth-century Spanish historian, Ibn 'Idārī, discovered at Fez in Morocco in the 1960s, provide new information on this hitherto obscure Saragossan king and make it possible to reconstruct an outline of his reign during the period 1110–20. *Ibn 'Idārī, al-Bayan al-Mugrib: Nuevos fragmentos almorávides y almohades*, trans. and annotated by A. Huici Miranda, *Textos Medievales*, 8 (Valencia: Anubar, 1963), 102–4, 125–33, 146, 201–2. On this king in general see G. Beech, "New Light on the Last Muslim King of Saragossa, 'Imād al-dawla Abd al-Malik ibn Hud, 1110–1130" (forthcoming).
  41. A. Huici Miranda, "Nuevas aportaciones de 'al Bayan al-Mugrib sobre les Almorávides," *Al-Andalus* 28 (1963): 322.
  42. See n. 30 above.
  43. J. Duplessy, *Les trésors monétaires médiévaux et modernes découvertes en France*, vol. 1, 751–1223 (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1985), no. 15, p. 27, Anneyrou (Drome); no. 21bis, p. 29, Aurillac (Cantal); no. 212, p. 85, Meslay-le-Vidame (Eure-et-Loire); Duplessy, "La circulation des monnaies arabes en Europe occidentale du VIII<sup>e</sup> au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Revue Numismatique* 18 (1956): 119–20.
  44. Elements of design include the use of roll corbels and lobed arches. Among the decorative motifs are various kinds of scrolls, florets, leaves and foliage, palmettes and rosettes. Katherine Watson, *French Romanesque and Islam: Andalusian Elements in French Architectural Decoration c. 1030–1180*, British Archeological Reports, International Series no. 488, 1 and 2 (Oxford: BAR, 1989), 247–59.
  45. Watson, *French Romanesque*, 63–108.
  46. A. C. Crombie, *Augustine to Galileo*, vol. 1 of *Science in the Middle Ages V–XIII Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 33–49.
  47. For a recent assessment of this question by an Arabist, see Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 64–113. As the earliest known troubadour poet, the man who brought the Eleanor vase back to Poitiers in 1120, William IX of Aquitaine, or William the Troubadour, is a key figure in this issue. For a summary of evidence concerning the likelihood of his having borrowed from Arabic poetry of his day, see G. Beech, "Troubadour Contacts with Muslim Spain and Knowledge of Arabic: New Evidence concerning William IX of Aquitaine" (forthcoming).
  48. Lamm, *Mittelalterliche Gläser*, pl. 67, no. 6, 195, eleventh-century vase at the abbey of Grandmont (Haute-Vienne); no. 13A, 197–98, tenth-century Egyptian flat triangular stand, private collection in Poitiers; table 68, no. 6, 200, bowl fragment, Egyptian eleventh century, at Abbey of Sainte-Croix, Poitiers; no. 8, 200, small bottle, Egyptian tenth century, at church of Arnac-la-Poste (Haute-Vienne); the Eleanor vase itself, presumably at the ducal palace in Poitiers until Eleanor gave it to Louis VII as a wedding gift in 1137.
  49. Hahnloser and Brugger-Koch, *Corpus*, do not pose this question in their study of the later medieval European centers.





# REALM OF THE IMMORTALS: PAINTINGS DECORATING THE JADE HALL OF THE NORTHERN SONG

By SCARLETT JANG

IN KAIFENG 開封, THE SPLENDID CAPITAL OF THE Northern Song dynasty (960–1127), imperial palaces, government offices, and high-ranking official residences were richly decorated. Among the now-lost painted decorations were pictorial compositions by the finest, most highly paid artists in the empire. Contemporary accounts of those paintings reveal a range of subjects embracing auspicious birds and flowers, animals, landscapes, and stories of legendary or historical figures as well as themes from the literary classics.

During the reign of the Northern Song emperor Zhezong 哲宗 (r. 1086–1100), stories from the classic text *Wuyi* 無逸 (Not straying from duty) were reportedly illustrated on the walls of the imperial lecture hall, where the emperor heard lectures on histories and classics by scholar-officials.<sup>1</sup> This text is said to have been written by the Duke of Zhou 周 of the Zhou dynasty (1045–222 B.C.) as a set of admonitions to King Cheng 成 when he began to attend state affairs after the duke's regency.<sup>2</sup> It instructed King Cheng in statecraft by giving good and bad examples from the past. Apparently, paintings illustrating the lessons of *Wuyi* also served to remind the Song emperor of the traits and character of a good ruler. In addition, the paintings were intended to help the emperor gain favor with his court officials by expressing his determination to be an enlightened ruler.

Similarly, the court painter Chen Yongzhi 陳用志 of the eleventh century is said to have painted a mural to decorate the residence of the high-ranking official Wen Yanbo 文彥伯 (1000–1097). It depicted a landscape with moving clouds emerging from mountains; the subject implied that Wen had taken up an official post in a timely manner and nurtured people, just as a timely rain nurtures the earth.<sup>3</sup> The theme of this work was drawn from the familiar Chinese expression *yunxing yushi* 雲行雨施 (rain comes after moving clouds), a metaphor for the benevolent actions of a ruler or official. Moreover, “clouds emerging from mountains” also alludes to a scholar's decision to leave his seclusion and take up an official post.<sup>4</sup> Wen Yanbo was one of the most influential and respected court officials in the Northern Song.

The theme of this mural painting reflected not only his status as a high-ranking official but also his political achievements.

These two examples illustrate clearly that, in addition to their decorative value, paintings made for the imperial court or court officials often carried important meanings related to the status of the person(s) who habitually occupied the places in which they were displayed, as well as to the functions of these places. This paper studies the meanings and functions of some paintings made to decorate the Northern Song Institute of the Academicians, popularly known as (*Hanlin*) *Xueshi yuan* (翰林) 學士院, one of the most important policy-making offices of the imperial court.

According to Guo Ruoxu 郭若虛, an art critic active during the mid-eleventh century, in the Northern Song *Xueshi yuan*, the walls of the Jade Hall, the main hall of the office, were decorated with mural paintings by Dong Yu 董羽 and Juran 巨然, both active during the second half of the tenth century.<sup>5</sup> Some time between 1025 and 1031 the scholar-official Yan Su 燕肅 (961?–1040) made a six-panel screen painting for the Jade Hall; in 1083, when the reconstruction of the *Xueshi yuan* was completed, the renowned court artist Guo Xi 郭熙 (after 1000–ca. 1090) was commissioned by his emperor to produce a screen painting to decorate it.<sup>6</sup>

Although none of these paintings survives, Song writers' enthusiasm about them has left fairly consistent first-hand reports on the themes, motifs, and dispositions of these paintings *in situ*. Although this kind of record-keeping is by no means rare in Chinese painting history, this instance is unique in that the paintings in the *Xueshi yuan* drew much attention and consistent description from Song scholars over a long span of time. These documents suggest that the paintings carried specific meanings or implications in relation to the status and fundamental concerns of the people who used or habitually occupied this government office—the emperor and the academicians who traditionally served as the emperor's personal advisors. Moreover, these paintings followed closely the thematic tradition of paintings that decorated the *Xueshi yuan* of the Tang dynasty (618–906). Both the Tang and Song paintings were intended to allude



to the “jade hall” referred to in Daoist literature as the residence of the immortals.

I propose here to investigate three issues: the traditional themes in paintings decorating the *Xueshi yuan* in the Tang and Song dynasties; how this thematic tradition in painting came about; and the function and underlying implications of these paintings in relation to the function of the *Xueshi yuan* and the status and concerns of its occupants.<sup>7</sup>

### *Xueshi and the Xueshi yuan of the Tang and Song*

*Xueshi* 學士, or Scholars, is a descriptive term for those who had acquired sound knowledge in literature, classics, and history and who excelled in literary composition. Men with such qualifications were sought by the government to assist in drafting imperial edicts or pronouncements and to participate in official compilation projects. As the emperor’s personal advisors, they also gave special counsel on various administrative matters. In the Han dynasty (202 B.C.–A.D. 220), such scholars served in various offices close to the throne in the inner court (the imperial household and its intimately related service agencies), as opposed to the outer court, which consisted of government bureaucracies.<sup>8</sup>

The Tang writer Li Zhao 李肇 (fl. 806–20) explains that Prince Qin 秦王, the future Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 627–49), founded the Institute of Literature (*Wenxue guan* 文學館)<sup>9</sup> to house eighteen of the most outstanding scholar-officials of the time as his administrative advisors. While concurrently holding their substantive posts elsewhere in the central government, these eighteen held the title *Xueshi*. They were divided into three groups and took turns serving in the Institute of Literature, where the prince spent much of his time. They received great privileges from him and were served specially prepared delicacies daily. Their contemporaries described them as “having ascended to Yingzhou 瀛洲,”<sup>10</sup> one of the three islands of the immortals in the Eastern Sea of Daoist legend. This description was probably based on the consensus among scholar-officials that these imperial secretaries enjoyed great imperial favor and high status without stressful responsibilities. Like the immortals, they lived in a luxurious environment, leading a seemingly carefree life.

Over the next hundred years, subsequent rulers institutionalized the ideal of housing a

group of outstanding scholar-officials as the throne’s personal administrative consultants. The Institute of Advancement of Literature (*Hongwen guan* 弘文館) was founded in 626 by Emperor Taizong. Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 713–55) founded the Academy of the Hall of Elegance and Rectitude (*Lizheng dian shuyuan* 麗正殿書院), a name that was changed in 725 to the Academy of Scholarly Worthies (*Jixian dian shuyuan* 集賢殿書院). High-ranking court officials who served in these institutes were also given the title *Xueshi* and still continued to hold their substantive posts.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, some scholars with similar capacities were also assigned to the *Hanlin Academy* (*Hanlin yuan* 翰林院), which in addition housed various artisans, craftsmen, and technicians, as well as Daoist and Buddhist clergymen.<sup>12</sup>

It is not certain exactly when the Tang dynasty *Hanlin Academy* was founded, but it already existed in the reign of the first emperor Taizu 太祖 (618–26). Before 666 *Hanlin Academy* scholars were not given specific titles, but after that time they held the title Scholars of the North Gate (*Beimen Xueshi* 北門學士). During the early years of the reign of Emperor Xuanzong, this title was changed first to Academician Awaiting Orders (*Hanlin daizhao* 翰林待詔) and later to Academician in Attendance (*Hanlin gongfeng* 翰林供奉). In 738, scholars serving in the *Hanlin Academy* were again called *Xueshi*, and a special compound named *Xueshi yuan* was constructed near the *Hanlin Academy* to house them exclusively.<sup>13</sup> This measure was apparently taken in order to distinguish these erudite men from the various artisans, technicians, and clergymen in the *Hanlin Academy* when the function of the *Xueshi* became increasingly important. At the same time, the Academy of Scholarly Worthies was relieved of its original responsibilities of assisting in policy-making and drafting imperial decrees. Academicians serving in the *Xueshi yuan* were selected by the emperor personally, mainly from among court officials. Because the Tang *Xueshi yuan* split from the *Hanlin Academy*, it was customarily called *Hanlin Xueshi yuan* and its academicians, *Hanlin Xueshi* 翰林學士.<sup>14</sup> From 738 onward, the *Xueshi yuan* became a permanent government institute in the Chinese imperial court, playing an important role in the court’s policy-making process.

Throughout the Northern Song, the *Xueshi yuan* was organized more or less like its Tang counterpart. In the Tang, however, various *Xueshi* titles with descriptive prefixes designated assign-

ments for officials holding substantive posts elsewhere in the central government, while in the Song, such titles designated substantive posts.<sup>15</sup> This may indicate, among other things, the rising political importance of the *Xueshi* as the emperor's personal advisors when the Song imperial court became increasingly autocratic.

Although already called *yutang* 玉堂 (jade hall) in Tang writings, the *Xueshi yuan* was not officially recognized by that name until the Song dynasty. In 991, Su Yijian 蘇易簡 (958–96), who served in the *Xueshi yuan* at the time, reportedly presented to Emperor Taizong (r. 976–97) his composition *Xu Hanlin zhi* 續翰林誌 (A supplement to the *Hanlin zhi* 翰林誌 [Records of the Hanlin Academy] by Li Zhao of the Tang). In return, Su received two poems and a piece of calligraphy written on red silk in the flying-white (*feibai* 飛白) style, reading *Yutang zhishu* 玉堂之署 (the Office of the Jade Hall), all done by the emperor himself. These four characters were at that time engraved on a wooden tablet, which was hung over the entrance of the main hall of the *Xueshi yuan*.<sup>16</sup> The term *jade hall* was thus officially recognized as an epithet meaning the *Xueshi yuan* in general or its main hall specifically.

The term *jade hall* was undoubtedly used in the Tang and Song dynasties to designate the *Xueshi yuan* because some Han dynasty scholars had served as the emperor's administrative aides in the Jade Hall Palace. The name of the Han dynasty Jade Hall in turn derived from Daoist literature. According to the *Hainei shizhou ji* 海內十洲記 (Record of the ten states within the seas), attributed to Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 (fl. 138 B.C.), there is a palace made of gold and a hall made of green jade in the Kunlun 崑崙 mountains governed by Xiwangmu 西王母, the Queen Mother of the West.<sup>17</sup> The Han Jade Hall Palace was thus named to allude to the residence of the immortals, as was the entire imperial living compound. It is recorded that when Emperor Wudi 武帝 (r. 140–74 B.C.) of the Han had his living quarters, the Jianzhang 建章 Palace, built south of the imperial pond, the *Taiye chi* 太液池 (The pond of great fluidity), he also had three artificial mountains made in the pond, as well as a platform twenty feet high, a thirty-five-foot-long stone whale, and two six-foot-long stone turtles. These three mountains alluded to the three islands of the immortals: Penglai 蓬萊, Fangzhang 方丈, and Yingzhou, located in the Eastern Sea. The huge whale and turtles are sacred animals also mentioned in Daoist legends in connection with the islands of the immortals. The Jade Hall Palace was located south of the

Jianzhang Palace; all the steps leading to it were said to be made of jade.<sup>18</sup> Evidently, the entire imperial living compound of Emperor Wudi was designed to create an illusion of the realm of the immortals, and the Jade Hall Palace, where scholars-in-waiting were housed, was therefore meant to allude to the jade hall where the immortals reside.

Due to the nature of the services its academicians rendered to the throne, the Tang *Xueshi yuan* was also located near the emperor's living compound; it was moved several times during the reign of Emperor Dezong 德宗 (r. 780–805) because the emperor's living quarters were moved.<sup>19</sup> The north gate of the Northern Song *Xueshi yuan* faced the imperial living compound from across a street,<sup>20</sup> so that its residents could swiftly respond to the emperor's needs.

Because of the Daoist implication of the Han dynasty Jade Hall Palace, Tang and Song writings refer abundantly to the land of the immortals in connection with the *Xueshi yuan*. In the *Hanlin zhi*, Li Zhao comments that people of his time compared scholars residing in the *Xueshi yuan* to immortals ascending to *Yuqing* 玉清, or Jade Purity, one of the three uppermost realms beyond heaven, as mentioned in Daoist literature.<sup>21</sup> This allusion appears in a poem by the Song scholar-official Lu Churan 呂處仁 (947–1007) written at a banquet held by the emperor in the *Xueshi yuan*:

高會蓬瀛振德音

The elegant gathering was held in Peng-Ying [Penglai and Yingzhou];

The imperial court's virtuous utterance is far-reaching.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, those who excelled in literary composition or, by extension, those who served in the *Xueshi yuan* in the Tang and Song, were often referred to as the immortals. We are told that when Li Bo 李白 (701–62), one of the greatest poets of all time, was summoned to the capital by Emperor Xuanzong, he met He Zhizhang 賀知章 (659–744), then advisor to the heir apparent, to whom he presented his own writings. After reading Li Bo's elegant compositions, He Zhizhang sighed and said to Li, "You are indeed an immortal descending to this world."<sup>23</sup> Similarly, Emperor Taizong of the Song once remarked that the position of academicians skilled in literary composition was indeed comparable to that of the immortals, and he regretted that he was unable to be one of them.<sup>24</sup> The academician Su Yijian admitted that those serving in the Jade Hall





FIG. 1. Part of a mural painting from cave 112, Dunhuang, dated from the eighth century. From Anil de Silva, *La Peinture de Paysage Chinoise d'après les Grottes de Touen-houang* (Paris: Holle Verlag, Baden-Baden, 1968), 176-77.

not only received great imperial favor but also lived in leisure the year round without arduous responsibilities. Comparing them to the immortals was indeed appropriate.<sup>25</sup>

All such allusions and analogies surrounding the *Xueshi yuan* and its academicians in turn created a thematic tradition in paintings made in the Tang and Song dynasties to adorn this important government building. These paintings, especially those decorating the main hall, implied the resemblance of the *Xueshi yuan* to the splendidly built jade hall in the land of the immortals, and of its privileged academicians to the immortals. To different degrees, moreover, these paintings were meant to lend the *Xueshi yuan* an artistic aura of otherworldliness. Although none of the paintings in question is now extant, we can investigate, as well as literary documents allow, the questions of what themes were chosen for them, how they achieved their intended purposes both thematically and artistically, and how contemporary audiences responded to them.

### Paintings Decorating the Tang *Xueshi yuan*

The Tang official Li Deyu 李德裕 (787–849) reports that, during the reign of Emperor Xianzong 憲宗 from 805 to 820, the west wall of the main hall of the *Xueshi yuan* was covered with a mural painting depicting deep seas surrounding winding, twisting mountains that looked like dragons. These mountains may well have resembled those on an eighth-century wall painting from cave 112 at Dunhuang (fig. 1). The remaining walls of the hall were adorned with painted images of cranes and pine trees. When Li Deyu served in the

*Xueshi yuan* from 820 to 822, the mural paintings in its main hall included a landscape painting representing the land of the immortals with a towering Mount Ao 崑崙 and depictions of flying cranes.<sup>26</sup> Li Zhao also reports that on the walls of the winding corridors of the Tang *Xueshi yuan* were painted images of cranes, pine trees, and strange rocks.<sup>27</sup> The crane, often referred to as *xianqin* 仙禽 or the immortals' bird, is a well-known symbol of immortality, and the pine tree signifies longevity. According to Daoist writings, Mount Ao is a sacred mountain where immortals reside; therefore the *Xueshi yuan* is often referred to as *Aogong* 崑崙宮, or Palace at Mount Ao, and its academicians as guests of Mount Ao.<sup>28</sup> Evidently, all the painted

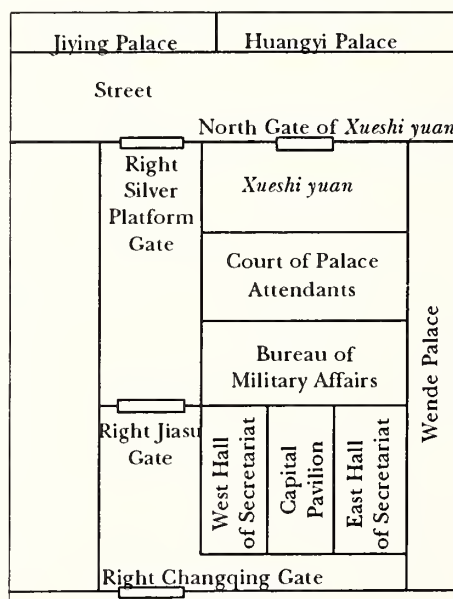
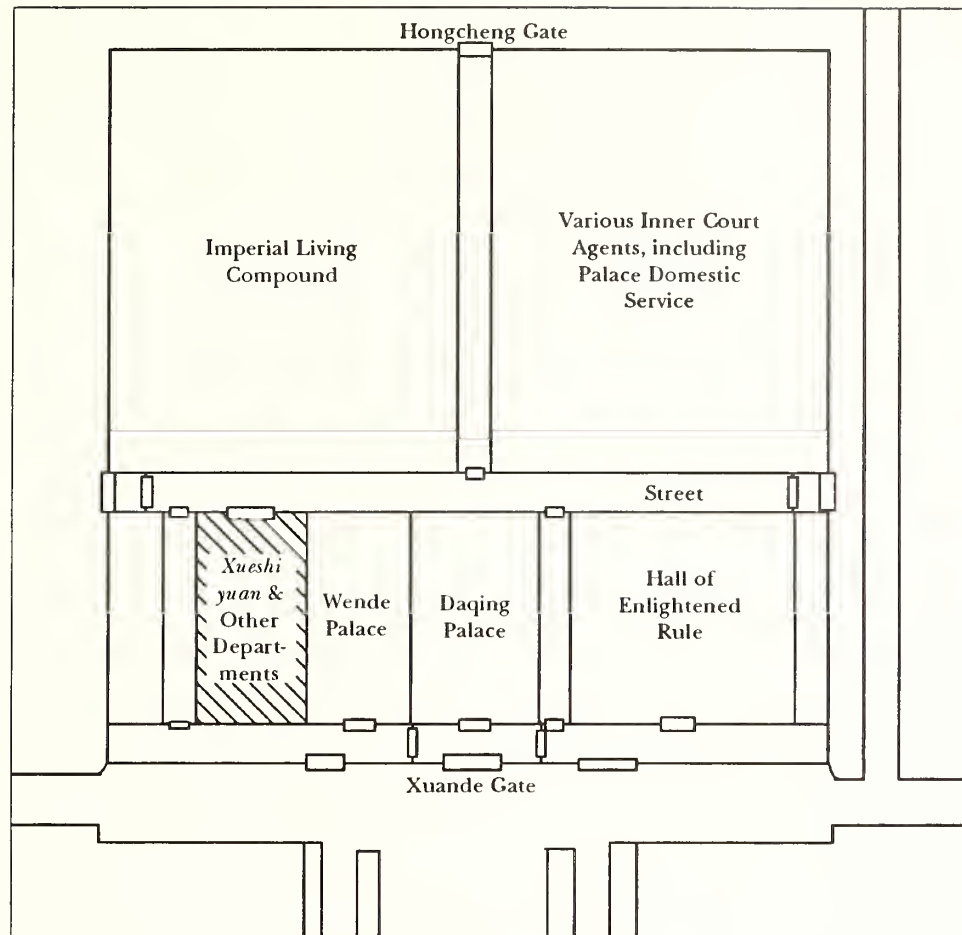


FIG. 2. Location of the *Xueshi yuan* before the 1082 reconstruction. After Ogawa, diagram 6.

FIG. 3. Northern Song imperial compound after 1082. After Ogawa, diagram 2. Shaded area corresponds to that of fig. 4.



images of cranes, pine trees, and Mount Ao, with their strong Daoist allusions, were used to imply that the *Xueshi yuan*, which housed the “immortal” academicians, resembled the land of the immortals.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, the representation of the dragon-like mountains in deep seas was meant to allude to the immortals’ island-mountain realm, which is surrounded by vast oceans.

### *Paintings Decorating the Song Xueshi yuan*

According to Ogawa Hiromitsu 小川裕充, the Song *Xueshi yuan* underwent two major reconstructions during the reign of the first emperor Taizu (r. 960–75). Little is known about its exact location or architectural layout. Probably from the beginning of Taizong’s reign to the late Yuanfeng 元豐 era (1078–85), the *Xueshi yuan* was located north of the Court of Palace Attendants (*Xuanhui yuan* 宣徽院) and west of the Wende 文德 Palace (fig. 2). In 1082 it was reconstructed and relocated, along with a number of departments including the Secretariat, Chancellery, and the Bureau of Military Affairs (figs. 3 and 4).<sup>30</sup> In

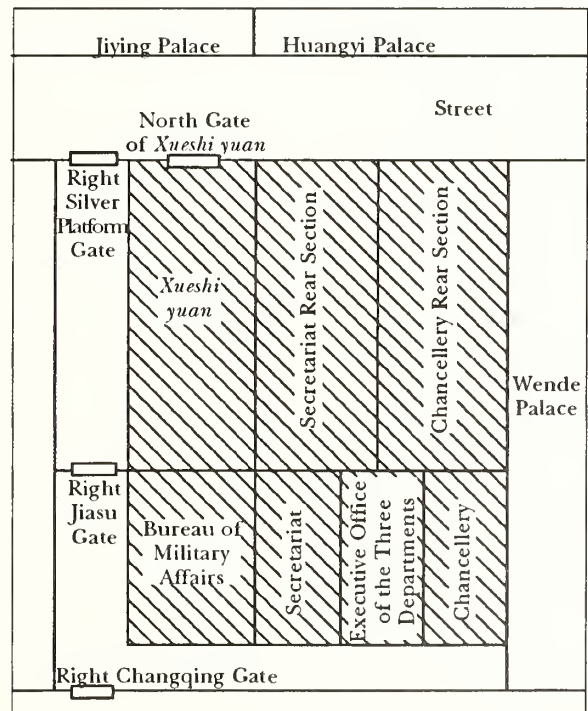


FIG. 4. Location of the *Xueshi yuan* after the 1082 reconstruction. After Ogawa, diagram 5.



1127 it was moved with the imperial court to the new capital of Hangzhou when the Song empire lost its vast land in the north to the Jin Tartars.

Here we cannot analyze in detail all the paintings made to decorate the *Xueshi yuan* during the entire Song dynasty. We will instead focus on those most-documented paintings made for this building from the reign of Emperor Taizong to the reign of Emperor Shenzong 神宗 (r. 1068–85), when the Song empire's fortune reached its apex. During this period the academicians, who were mostly members of the newly established elite class of scholar-officials, enjoyed their highest prestige as the cultural and political spokesmen of the empire. For the first time in Chinese history, these scholar-officials won their status entirely through their own merits, having been selected through their performance in the competitive civil service examination, regardless of their family backgrounds.<sup>31</sup>

Ogawa indicates that before its reconstruction in 1082 the entire Song *Xueshi yuan* complex consisted of the Jade Hall, two libraries behind it, four offices for the academicians, and offices for the *daizhao* 待詔, express couriers, and clerks in charge of files and book collections (fig. 5). Major paintings decorating the *Xueshi yuan* before its 1082 reconstruction included two mural paintings by the court artist Dong Yu (active during the late tenth to early eleventh centuries), who specialized in depicting water, fish, and dragons; a wall painting by Juran, a monk-artist from Nanjing; and a screen painting by Yan Su (?–1040), a scholar-official amateur painter. These

paintings all appeared in the the central hall of the Jade Hall. There were also mural paintings in the corridors between the central hall and its east and west halls (fig. 6).

Su Yijian reports that the west and east walls of the central hall were entirely covered with mural paintings of water scenes by Dong Yu. Su comments that these representations of waves surging in winds whirling over vast, misty oceans were made to look like the scenery at Yingzhou. Moreover, the walls of the corridors were painted with images of white cranes amid slender bamboos. Precious and rare plants were grown along the railings of the corridors.<sup>32</sup> Although Su does not explicitly indicate whether Dong Yu's paintings also depicted mountains or islands, the phrase "to make it look like the scenery at Yingzhou" seems to imply a depiction of mountains or islands of some sort. This assumption is supported by the academician Song Bo 宋白 (933–1009) in a line from a poem written after his initial viewing of Dong Yu's paintings in the Jade Hall:

四眸已覺三山近

Glancing to the side, I became aware that I was approaching the Three Mountains.<sup>33</sup>

The "Three Mountains" are, of course, the three islands of the immortals: Yingzhou, Penglai, and Fangzhang. In order to convey the vastness of the misty seas, Dong Yu perhaps depicted the mountains or islands in the far distance, subordinate to the major motifs of the surging waves shown in

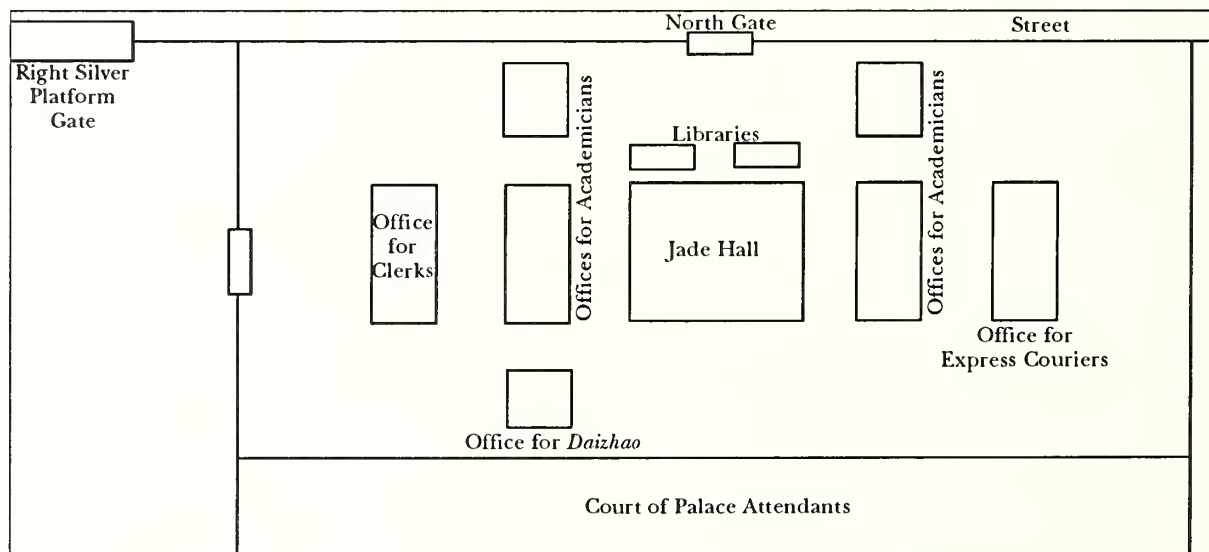


FIG. 5. Layout of the *Xueshi yuan* before the 1082 reconstruction. After Ogawa, diagram 7.

figure 7, which reconstructs the mural painting program in the Jade Hall before it was rebuilt in 1082.<sup>34</sup> The illusionistic effect of Dong Yu's paintings apparently made Song Bo feel as if he were being carried by a boat in the vast oceans, approaching the isles of the immortals.

Clearly, in their mural paintings for the Jade Hall, the Song artist Dong Yu and the now-unknown painter of the corridor's cranes and bamboos both closely followed the thematic tradition established in the Tang dynasty. In both the Tang and Song cases, the imagery of the crane and the immortals' mountains or islands in vast, misty seas associates the *Xueshi yuan* with the

immortals' jade hall and these scholars with the immortals. Expressing the feelings these paintings evoked in him, Su Yijian wrote that on a normal day, when noises from outside had died down and a day's work had been finished, one heard the sounds of the hourly drum, drifting on the winds to the *Xueshi yuan*. Looking at the moonlight-drenched courtyard from the Jade Hall, one felt as if the *Xueshi yuan* were the land of the immortals existing in this world.<sup>35</sup>

Juran painted his *Xueshi yuan* mural on the north wall of the central hall. Both Su Song 蘇宋 (1020–1101) and Liu Daochun 劉道醇 (active mid-eleventh century) suggest that Juran's painting

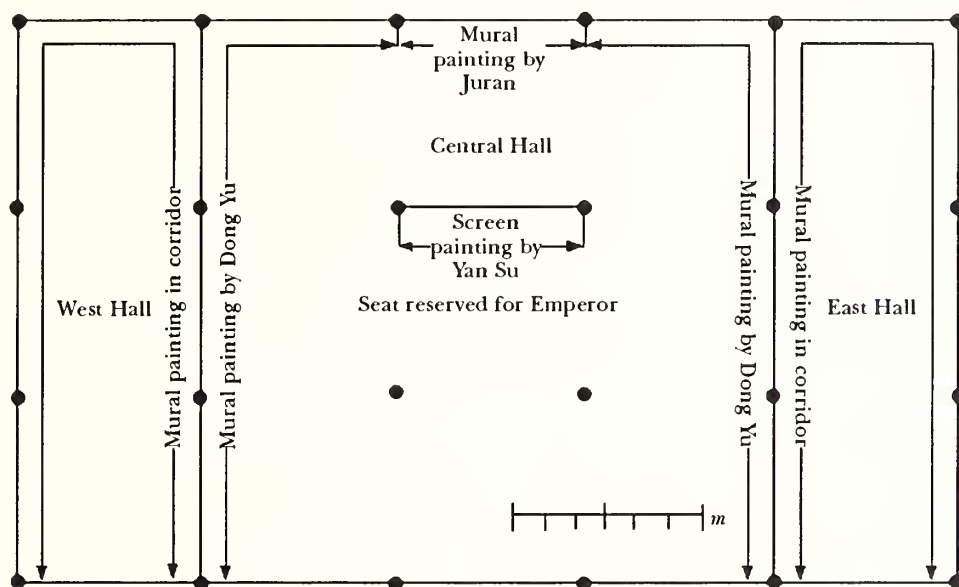


FIG. 6. Disposition of paintings in the Jade Hall before the 1082 reconstruction. After Ogawa, diagram 13.

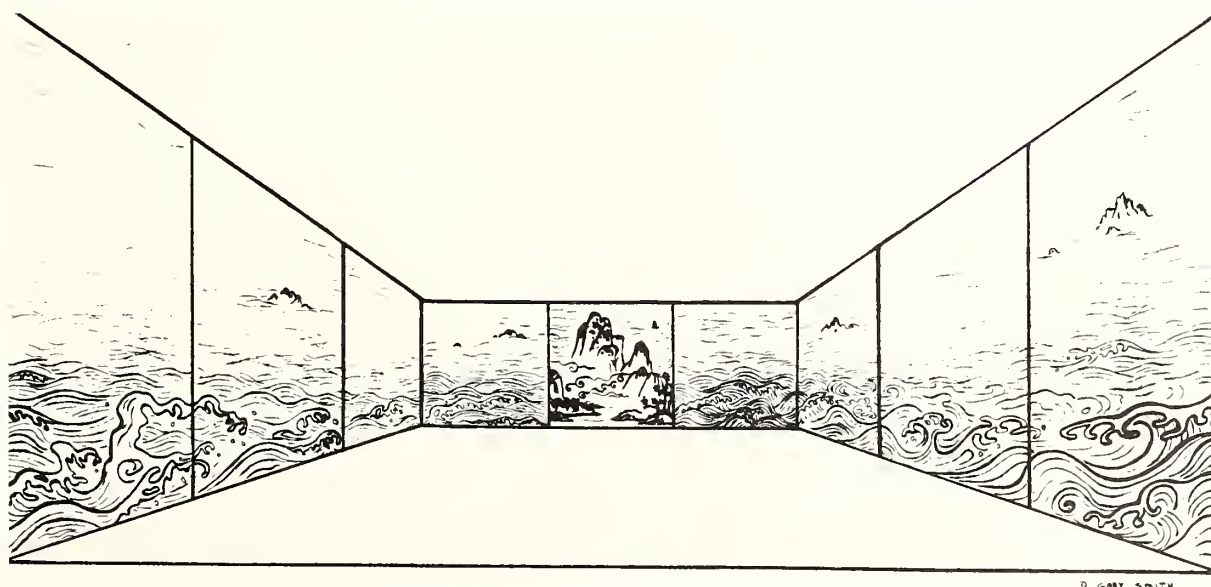


FIG. 7. Pictorial reconstruction of the mural paintings program in the Central Hall of the Jade Hall before 1082.





FIG. 8. *Buddhist Retreat by Stream and Mountains*, att. to Juran.  
Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 73" x 22 ½".  
The Cleveland Museum of Art.  
Gift of Katharine Holden Thayer, 59.348.

depicted the theme "Morning Scenery in Mountain Mists."<sup>36</sup> Song Qi 宋祁 (998–1061), who served in the *Xueshi yuan* during the 1040s, described Juran's wall painting in the Jade Hall as representing lofty peaks with small, rounded rocks. On the vast, peaceful water a boat sailed in the far

distance. Looking at the painting, one felt as if one were riding on a sea of clouds.<sup>37</sup> None of Juran's paintings survives. The hanging scroll entitled *Buddhist Retreat by Stream and Mountains* (fig. 8) is one of the best-known paintings traditionally attributed to him. The drawing of the central panel in figure 7 is based more or less on this type of painting.

Although Juran's theme for the Jade Hall, "Morning Scenery in Mountain Mists," does not immediately call to mind the land of the immortals or its inhabitants, mists and clouds are used extensively in Daoist writings to describe their realms. They not only enhance the mystery of the otherworld but also emphasize its unattainability. More important, Juran's painting created the illusionistic effect that made Song Qi feel as if he, like the immortals, were riding on a sea of clouds.

Ogawa indicates that the mural paintings by Dong Yu were completed some time during 980 and 983. They not only covered the west and east walls of the central hall, but each also extended around the corners to cover one-third of the north wall (fig. 7). Ogawa also suggests that Juran's painting, occupying the central third of the north wall, was done no later than 992.<sup>38</sup> We do not know whether the entire north, east, and west walls of the central hall were initially covered by Dong Yu's paintings, nor do we know whether a painting was made for the central section of the north wall before Juran was commissioned to do his work. Judging from the arrangement of the three wall paintings shown in figure 7, however, we are certain that the wall painting by Juran was intended as an integral part of the entire mural-painting program. In other words, Juran's painting was meant to be viewed along with those by Dong Yu on either side and as conceptually inseparable from them. Juran's towering mountain peaks may be perceived, in effect, as mountains or islands surrounded by the vast, misty oceans of agitated waves depicted by Dong Yu.

Ogawa indicates that each of the three walls of the central hall measured approximately eighteen meters long.<sup>39</sup> We can only imagine how overwhelming it must have felt to stand in front of and surrounded by mural paintings of such impressive size, arranged in so bold a manner. These three mural paintings in the Jade Hall were all carefully designed to create an illusion of the cloud-wrapt mountains of the immortals amid immense oceans of turbulent water, a pictorial program determined by the analogy of the prestigious *Xueshi yuan* to the realm of the immortals

and of the academicians to the immortals themselves.

When Song Shou 宋綬 (991–1040) served in the *Xueshi yuan* during 1025 and 1039, his friend Yan Su (961?–1040), a high-ranking official, painted a six-paneled screen representing landscapes and presented it to Song to decorate the Jade Hall.<sup>40</sup> Ogawa indicates that in important government offices such as those of the Chancellery, Secretariat, or *Xueshi yuan*, the main hall or the reception hall usually had a painted screen placed behind the seat specifically reserved for the emperor. In just this fashion the six-paneled screen painting by Yan Su was placed behind the emperor's seat in the central hall of the Jade Hall.<sup>41</sup> Yan Su was a scholar-amateur painter who followed the style of Li Cheng 李成, one of the most reputable landscapists of the tenth century. Yan Su is said to have made quite a few mural and screen paintings for various government offices as well as for some temples.<sup>42</sup> None of his paintings survives, and very little is known about the screen painting he made for the Jade Hall. The only known literary account of this particular painting is a poem by Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021–86), which reads in part:

六幅生絹四五峰，暮雲樓閣有無中

On the six pieces of raw silk is a series of four or five mountain peaks;  
Half-hidden in the evening clouds are storied pavilions.<sup>43</sup>

Judging from this brief description, Yan Su's screen painting may well have belonged to the type of landscape painting that typically represents elaborately constructed pavilions in the mountains, half-hidden in mists or clouds. Paintings of this type usually imply a perfectly secluded world or the land of the immortals. Often such paintings were given titles like *Xianshan louge* 仙山樓閣 (Pavilions in the immortals' mountains). The towering mountains in mists or clouds of Yan Su's painting may suggest the realm of the immortals, thus according well with the theme of Juran's mural painting as well as the entire wall-painting program in the Jade Hall. This screen painting by Yan Su is said to have been in the Jade Hall until 1082, when the *Xueshi yuan* was reconstructed.<sup>44</sup>

Little is written about the painting program designed for the *Xueshi yuan* as a whole or the Jade Hall in particular after its reconstruction was

completed in 1083. Literary accounts by Song writers of paintings decorating the Jade Hall after 1083 concentrate mainly on the screen painting by the renowned court artist Guo Xi (after 1000–ca. 1090), who had been summoned to the imperial court some time around 1068. He later became Emperor Shenzong's favorite court artist and was commissioned to make numerous paintings for the court as well as for high-ranking officials.<sup>45</sup> Guo Xi recorded in the *Huaji* 畫記 section of the *Linquan gaozhi ji* 林泉高志集, an essay supplemented by his son Guo Si 郭思, that when the reconstruction of the *Xueshi yuan* was completed in 1083, the palace eunuch Zhang Shiliang 張士良 transmitted to Guo Xi Emperor Shenzong's order to decorate the Jade Hall: "The *Hanyuan* 翰苑 [an unofficial reference to the *Xueshi yuan*] is a place for writing brilliant literary works. You, sir, have a son [Guo Si] studying poetry and classics. It would be appropriate if you could make some paintings with special care [for the *Xueshi yuan*]."<sup>46</sup>

Complying with Shenzong's order, Guo Xi made a screen painting for the Jade Hall. Ogawa suggests that this screen painting was probably composed of six panels and placed behind the seat reserved for the emperor in the Jade Hall.<sup>47</sup> Both Cai Juhou 蔡居厚 (active 1107–10) and Ye Mengde 葉夢得 (1077–1148) record that the theme of Guo Xi's screen painting was "Morning Scenery by a Spring River."<sup>48</sup> Other Song writers, such as Su Shi 蘇軾 (1036–1101), simply refer to it as *Spring Mountains*. According to Guo Si, his father's screen painting depicting mountains in spring emphasized the harmonious atmosphere of a crisp spring with all the elements of nature flourishing and blooming, creating a feeling of delight and contentment. The scenery depicted in this screen painting looked like that at Mount Siming 四明 and Mount Tianlao 天姥 in present-day Zhejiang Province.<sup>49</sup> Mount Siming is one of the thirty-six sacred mountains in Daoist literature, each of which has a cave where immortals dwell.<sup>50</sup> It is reported that on the cliffs of Mount Tianlao there are some writings in tadpole-like characters, but the cliffs are so steep and high that no one is able to decipher them. During springtime, legend says that woodcutters heard music coming from the top of the cliffs,<sup>51</sup> apparently suggesting that Mount Tianlao is also one of the realms of the immortals.

In a colophon on another of Guo Xi's paintings, *Autumn Mountains*, Su Shi refers to Guo Xi's screen painting *Spring Mountains* in the Jade Hall:





FIG. 9. *Early Spring*, by Guo Xi, dated 1072. Hanging scroll, ink and slight color on silk, h. 62 1/4". National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.

玉堂晝掩春日閑；中有郭熙畫春山。  
鳴鳩乳燕初睡起；白波青嶂非人間。

The Jade Hall is closed during the day in the leisure-filled springtime;

Inside [the Jade Hall] is a painting of spring mountains by Guo Xi.

[In the picture] the chirping pigeons and young sparrows have just awakened;

[With its] white ripples and tall, green mountains, [the scenery] does not look like that of this world.<sup>52</sup>

Again, both Guo Si and Su Shi indicate clearly that Guo Xi's screen painting *Spring Mountains* evoked a feeling of the land of the immortals, full of joy and harmony. Su Shi's poem suggests further that academicians enjoying their leisure in springtime are like carefree immortals.

It is impossible to create a detailed pictorial reconstruction of the screen painting based simply on Song writers' brief descriptions of it. One can only assume that the six-panel screen painting, measuring approximately six meters wide, depicted a panoramic landscape. It might have represented a series of tall, cloudlike mountain masses, like those depicted in Guo Xi's famous painting *Early Spring* (fig. 9), with ravines here and there receding deeply into the distance and green, luxuriant trees in the foreground near vast areas of white-rippled water stretching to either side of the composition and beyond. Compositionally, it may well have resembled the handscroll *Fishermen* (fig. 10) by Xu Daoning 許道寧 (ca. 970–1051/52) in the Nelson-Atkins Gallery of Art or the handscroll *Clearing Autumn*

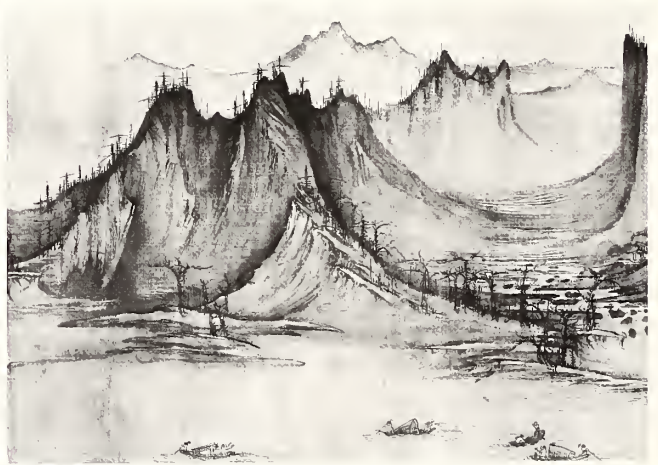
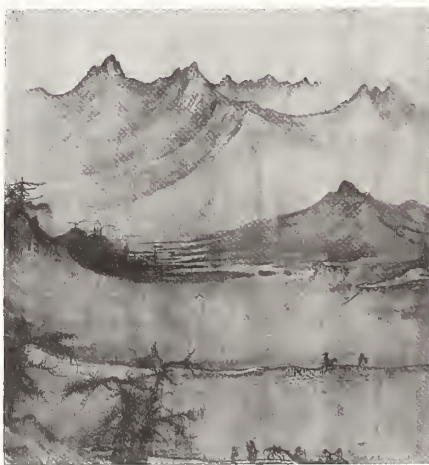


FIG. 10 continued.

*Skies over Mountains and Valleys* (fig. 11) in the Freer Gallery of Art, which is considered a work by a close follower of Guo Xi, dated from around 1100.<sup>53</sup> In this screen painting Guo Xi might have altogether discarded the depictions of human dwellings and human activities shown in the Freer and Nelson handscrolls, instead emphasizing the fantastic landscape to enhance a sense of otherworldliness.

The theme "Spring Mountains" also carried a significant reference to the imperial court. In a colophon to a picture on this theme presented to him by Emperor Xuanzong 宣宗 (r. 1426–36), the Ming scholar-official Yang Rong 楊榮 (1371–1440) comments:

春者四時之首，山則仁者之所好也。  
人之仁即時之春。天以春生萬物，  
皇上以仁育萬物，其德一也。

Spring is the beginning of the year. A benevolent man is delighted to be in the mountains. A man's benevolence is like spring. Heaven gives birth to all things under the sun in spring. Your Majesty nourishes all beings under the sun with benevolence. The virtue of heaven and that of Your Majesty are the same.<sup>54</sup>

Confucius said that a benevolent man took delight in the mountains. The grace of spring that rejuvenates all things in nature serves in the Chinese classics as a metaphor for benevolent actions of the ruler or officials toward their subjects. The Ming emperor might have used this theme to encourage Yang Rong or recognize him as a good official. Yang in turn used this painting

to praise his emperor's virtue as a benevolent ruler. We are not certain whether or not this eulogistic allusion was also intended in Guo Xi's screen painting in the Jade Hall since none of the extant literary references to this particular painting makes this connection. In executing such an important imperial commission, however, Guo Xi must have carefully thought out the possible implications of its theme "Spring Mountains," which would have pleased both his emperor and the *Hanlin* academicians.<sup>55</sup> On the one hand, this screen painting was produced in praise of his emperor, whose benevolence nourished his people as the rejuvenating spring nourishes all things in nature; therefore it was appropriate to place this screen painting behind the seat reserved for the emperor in the Jade Hall. On the other hand, Guo Xi's painting evoked a feeling of otherworldliness, based on customary allusions to the Jade Hall and its residents. These two layers of implication are cleverly integrated in a single painting, and they are closely associated with the status and fundamental concerns of the most important people who used this office, the emperor and the *Hanlin* academicians.<sup>56</sup>

Judging from its impressive size (158.3 x 108.1 cm), the silk hanging scroll *Early Spring* (fig. 9) by Guo Xi might have been intended for the wall of some large imperial palace in emperor Shenzong's court. It might also have carried an auspicious implication in reference to Emperor Shenzong's benevolent rule. In this picture the energetic life force, after a long winter dormancy, is transmitted through the ever-

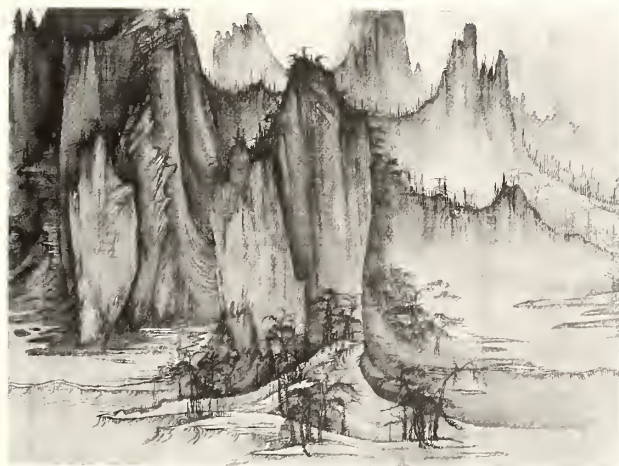


FIG. 10. *Fishermen*, by Xu Daoning. Handscroll, ink and slight color on silk, 82 ½" x 19".  
The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Nelson Fund 33-1559.



moving, cloudlike rock formations, the flickering light and shadows, the ever-changing mists, and the leafless but strong trees, with their branches and twigs growing outward. This life force, which nurtures all things in nature in early spring, might have served as an analogy to emperor Shenzong's nurturing government.

In contrast to the highly agitated elements in nature, the human figures in *Early Spring* are quietly engaged in their activities: a family of four returning to their homestead perhaps from a nearby village market, a fisherman mooring his boat by the river bank, some pilgrims on their way to Buddhist temples, and a wood-gatherer coming down from the mountains. Peace and contentment pervade all these activities. These human figures live in an undisturbed world, in which they work when the sun rises, retire when the sun sets, and pursue their religious interests without feeling the overpowering presence of the government. The benevolent government that provides them with peace is like the nurturing spring in which they live.

We may conclude that in the Tang dynasty, paintings decorating the *Xueshi yuan* included representations of deep seas with dragonlike mountains, cranes, pines, and the Daoist sacred mountain Mount Ao—motifs deeply associated with the land of the immortals. The choice of these motifs was dictated by earlier-established literary analogies between the *Xueshi yuan* and the jade hall, the immortals' residence in Daoist legends, as well as between its academicians and the immortals.

In the Song dynasty, painters commissioned to decorate the *Xueshi yuan* more or less followed the thematic traditions established in the Tang. In addition to the images of cranes painted on the walls of the corridors, Dong Yu and Juran entirely covered the north, east, and west walls of



FIG. 11 *continued.*

the Jade Hall with paintings of towering mountains rising into the sky and surrounded by vast oceans of surging waves. The impressive size and extent of this series of mural paintings created for viewers the illusion that they were in the land of the immortals, Yingzhou in the Eastern Sea. Both Yan Su's and Guo Xi's screen paintings in the Jade Hall also aimed at evoking feelings of otherworldliness. All were meant to imply that *Hanlin* academicians, who enjoyed prestigious status and imperial favor yet were not burdened with onerous duties, were indeed like the carefree immortals who lived in splendid palaces. Guo Xi's screen painting on the theme of "Spring Mountains" also eulogized his emperor's benevolent administration.

This study demonstrates the fundamental dynamics of Chinese court painting and how we can arrive at an understanding of a given painting in its sociopolitical and cultural context. The correlation between the choice of the themes for the paintings made to decorate the Tang and Song *Xueshi yuan* and the status of the people who used this office is just one example of a larger and hitherto insufficiently studied phenomenon in Chinese painting.

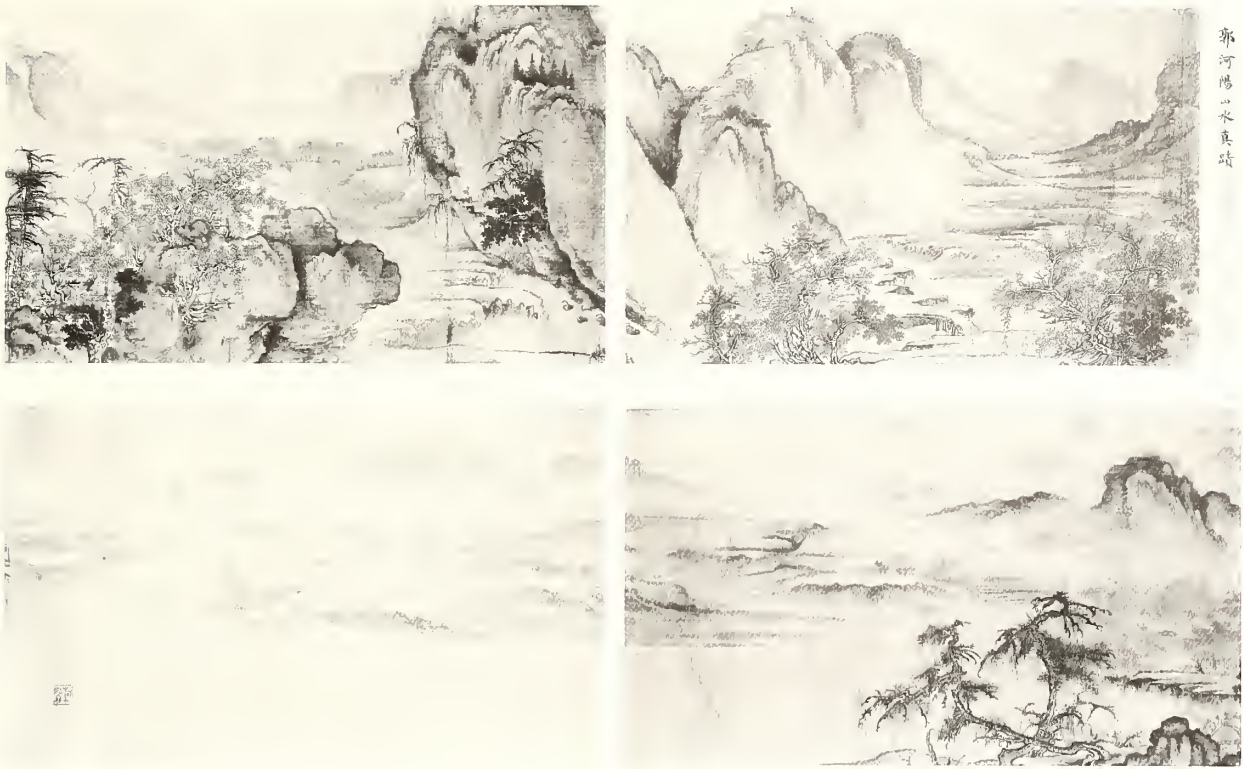


FIG. 11. *Clearing Autumn Skies over Mountains and Valleys*, att. to Guo Xi. Handscroll, ink and light color on silk, 206.0 x 26.0 cm. Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



## Notes

1. Xu Song 徐松 (1781–1848), *Song Huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿 (Beijing: National Beijing Library, 1936, facsimile reproduction of 1809 original), *juan* 1753 / 6:15ab.
2. *Shangshu* 尚書, in the *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan, 1976), vol. 1, *juan* 17:240a.
3. Liu Daochun, *Shengchao minghua ping*, in Yu Anlan 于安瀾, ed., *Huaping congshu* 畫品叢書 (Shanghai: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1982), *juan* 2:34.
4. In the famous prose-poem “Returning Home” by Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (372?–427), Tao expresses his lack of interest in officialdom with these words: “The clouds unconsciously emerged from the mountains.” See Yang Yong 楊庸, *Tao yuanming ji jiaojian* 陶淵明集校箋 (Hong Kong: Wuxingji shuju, 1971), 267.
5. Guo Ruoxu (ca. 1080), *Tuhua jianwen zhi* 圖畫見聞誌 (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1963), *juan* 6:137. See also Alexander Soper, *Kuo Juo-hsü's Experiences in Paintings (T'u-hua chien-wen chih): An Eleventh Century History of Chinese Painting* (Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1951), 6:89. Unless otherwise specified, translations of Chinese institutional and official titles in this paper follow those of Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985).
6. See Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞 (1893–?), *Song Shihua jiyi* 宋詩話輯佚, *Yen-ching Journal of Chinese Studies Monograph Series*, 2 vols., no. 14 (Beijing: Yanjing University Press, 1937), 35; Guo Xi and Guo Si, *Huaji*, collated by Bo Songnian 薄松年 and Chen Shaofeng 陳少丰 in “Du Linquan gaozhi ji zhaji,” *Meishu yanjiu* 3 (1987): 70.
7. In his excellent article “Inchō no meiga,” Ogawa Hiromitsu meticulously reconstructs not only the architectural layout of the Song *Xueshi yuan* before its rebuilding in the late Yuanfeng era (1078–85) but also the locations where some paintings known to us through literary sources were displayed in the *Xueshi yuan*. Ogawa correctly concludes that these paintings represented a very clear stylistic development of Chinese landscape painting from the late Five Dynasties (907–59) to the end of the Northern Song period (960–1127). In other words, these paintings represented a stylistic evolution from the landscape style canonized by such famous artists as Dong Yuan 董源 (ca. 937–75) and Juran (active ca. 960–80) from the Jiangnan region to the imposing, monumental landscape style culminating in the works by Guo Xi. Ogawa's article stops short of studying the thematic significance of these paintings in relation to the function of the *Xueshi yuan* and the status of its academicians. See Ogawa Hiromitsu, “Inchō no meiga” [hereafter Ogawa], *Suzuki Kei sensei kanreki kinen chugoku kaigashi ronshu* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunka, 1981), 23–85. I would like to acknowledge that in preparing the present paper, I benefited greatly from Ogawa's study, as my constant references to his article indicate.
8. For instance, scholars who were assigned to the Golden-horse Gate (*Jinma men* 金馬門), where the palace eunuchs were usually housed, were given the title Official-in-waiting (*Daizhao*). See Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145–86 B.C.), *Shiji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), *juan* 126:3205. There were also scholars called Palace Attendant (*Shizhong* 侍中) with these duties serving in the Jade Hall Palace in the emperor's living compound, the Weiyang 未央 Palace. Ban Gu 班固 (32–92), *Hanshu* 漢書 (Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), *juan* 45:3818; the commentary by Yan Shigu 顏師古 on p. 3184. *Shizhong* was a supplementary title awarded in the Han dynasty to officials of the central government chosen by the emperor as his confidential advisors.
9. In *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, Hucker does not list the title *Wenxue guan*; the translation is mine.
10. Li Zhao, *Hanlin zhi*, in Hong Zun 洪遵 (1120–74), comp., *Hanyuan qunshu* 翰苑群書, *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu chenben* 文淵閣四庫全書珍本 [hereafter WYGSKQS] (Taipei: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1983), vol. 595, *juan* 1:1b.
11. Li Zhao, *Hanlin zhi*, 2a.
12. The Tang *Hanlin Academy* included seven departments: arts and crafts, poetry, Buddhism and Daoism, alchemy, learning of classics, divination, and calligraphy and chess. See Liu Xu 劉煦 (tenth century) et al., *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), *juan* 43:1853.
13. Li Zhao, *Hanlin zhi*, 2ab.
14. *Hanlin Xueshi yuan* is often referred to as *Hanlin yuan*, or *Hanlin Academy*, from the Song to the Qing (1644–1911); it is indistinguishable from the Tang *Hanlin yuan*. For clarity and consistency, the Chinese term *Xueshi yuan* is used in this paper to refer to the Institute of Academicians.
15. For more information concerning the institutional development of this organization, readers may

- consult, for example, records of government offices in Chinese dynastic histories or Ma Duanlin's 馬端臨 (fl. 1245–1322) *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考. As in the Tang, the title *Xueshi* was also given to court officials who were assigned to various palace buildings, such as the Hall of Heavenly Manifestation (*Tianzhang ge* 天章閣) and the Dragon Diagram Hall (*Longtu ge* 龍圖閣), among others.
16. See Xu Song, *Song Huiyao jigao*, juan 16647, 6/46:2a; Su Qi 蘇耆 (978–1066), *Ci Xu Hanlin zhi* 次續翰林誌 (Supplement to the *Xu Hanlin zhi* by his father Su Yijian), WYGSKQS, vol. 595, juan 9:2b.
  17. Dongfang Shuo, att., *Hainei shizhou ji*, WYGSKQS, vol. 1042, 11b–12a.
  18. Sima Qian, *Shiji*, juan 12:17.
  19. Li Zhao, *Hanlin zhi*, 10a.
  20. Ye Mengde (1077–1148), *Shilin yanyu* 石林燕語 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 96; see also figs. 2, 3, and 4.
  21. Li Zhao, *Hanlin zhi*, 12a.
  22. Cited from *Jinlin yanhui ji*, WYGSKQS, vol. 595, juan 7:5b.
  23. Meng Qi 孟啓 (fl. 886), *Benshi shi* 本事詩 (n.p., 1800), 13b–14a.
  24. Su Yijian, *Xu Hanlin zhi*, WYGSKQS, vol. 595, juan 8:7a; Ye Mengde, *Bishu luhua* 避暑錄話, WYGSKQS, vol. 863, juan 2:39b.
  25. Su Yijian, *Xu Hanlin zhi*, 9b.
  26. Li Deyu also reports that one day when Emperor Xianzong was about to visit the *Xueshi yuan*, the mural painting of deep seas and winding mountains was wiped out, and images of cranes and pines were painted over it on the same wall. Li does not explain the reason for this replacement but simply states that one of the palace attendants was afraid. See Li Deyu, *Li weigong huichang yipin ji* 李衛公會昌一品集 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1936), *bieji*, juan 3:195. Ogawa thinks that the mural painting on the west wall of the main hall represented dragons in the sea (Ogawa, 43). However, the phrase *hua haizhong qulong shan* 畫海中曲龍山, which Li Deyu uses in reference to the mural painting on the west wall, should be read as “representing winding dragonlike mountains in deep seas.” Although Ogawa does not explain fully, he may have based his reading of this phrase on an assumption that the palace attendant feared the emperor would see the image of the dragon, which was an emblem of the throne and therefore inappropriate to be shown in the *Xueshi yuan*; he thus wiped out the mural painting and replaced it with images of cranes and pines.
  27. Li Zhao, *Hanlin zhi*, 12ab.
  28. Mount Ao is in present-day Hunan Province. It is said that three Daoist monks visited Mount Ao and attained complete understanding of the Dao, becoming immortals. See Li Xian 李賢 (1408–66) et al., *Daming yitong zhi* 大明一統志 (n. p., Ming edition), juan 64:20a. It is also said that the immortals' island Penglai is held up by a huge sea turtle called Ao. Cited from Chen Menglei 陳夢雷 (1651–ca. 1723) et al., comp., *Gujin tushu jicheng* 古今圖書集成 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1934), juan 30:43b. Penglai is thus also referred to as *Aofeng* 鰲峰 (Peak Ao). See also the poems by Li Zhi 李至 (947–1001) and Han Pi 韓丕 (?–1009) written during the banquet given by the imperial court in the *Xueshi yuan* and collected in *Jinlin yanhui ji* 禁林讌會集, 44a–b.
  29. Cranes, pine trees, and tall, strange mountain peaks all appear in a single painting that depicts the land of the immortals in, for example, the handscroll entitled *The Land of the Immortals* by Chen Ruyan 陳汝言 (ca. 1331–before 1371). See the reproduction in Wai Kam-ho et al., ed., *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting: The Collections of the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City and the Cleveland Museum of Art* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art and Indiana University Press, 1980), 139, no. 114.
  30. See Ogawa, n. 6 and pp. 59, 31, 29.
  31. For more information on the establishment of this elite class of scholar-officials and its significance in Northern Song culture and politics, see Peter Bol, “Culture and Way in Eleventh Century China” (Ph. D. diss., Princeton University, 1982).
  32. Su Yijian, *Xu Hanlin zhi*, 8a. Similarly, Song Qi, also a *Hanlin* academician, describes these mural paintings by Dong Yu with these words: “On the dark seas are myriad layers of surging waves that look like clouds.” See Song Qi, *Jingwen ji* 景文集 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1936), juan 23:199.
  33. Song Bo's literary works are no longer extant. This part of the poem is recorded in *Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜, compiled in 1120 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1936), juan 9:245.
  34. Ogawa again thinks that the mural paintings by Dong Yu in the Jade Hall represented dragons in the sea. However, none of the Song writers who



actually saw these paintings support Ogawa's claim. Liu Daochun did record that Dong's painting in the Jade Hall represented dragons playing in water. See Liu Daochun, *Shengchao minghua ping* 聖朝名畫評, *juan* 2:139. However, it is uncertain whether or not Liu actually saw the wall paintings by Dong Yu.

35. Su Yijian, *Xu Hanlin zhi*, 8a.
36. Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji* 蘇魏公文集 (n.p., preface 1842), *juan* 72:106; Liu Daochun, *Shengchao minghua ping*, 134. It is recorded that the wall paintings in the libraries of the *Xueshi yuan*, which were commissioned by Su Yijian from Juran, were also on this theme. See Su Qi, *Ci Xu Hanlin zhi*, 5a.
37. Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, *juan* 24:299. In standard Chinese painting records, Juran's paintings typically depict clusters of small, rounded boulders on mountain tops.
38. See Ogawa, 72–73.
39. Ogawa, 36.
40. Guo Shaoyu, *Song Shihua jiyi*, 35.
41. Ogawa, 44–45; see also fig. 6.
42. Guo Ruoxu, *Tuhua jianwen zhi*, *juan* 3:60–61.
43. Wang Anshi, *Linchuan ji* 臨川集 (Shanghai: Zhongyang shudian, 1935), *juan* 30:62.
44. Guo Shaoyu, *Song Shihua jiyi*, 35.
45. Ju-yu Scarlett Jang, "Issues of Public Service in the Themes of Chinese Court Painting" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1989), 58–59.
46. See Bo Songnian and Chen Shaofeng, "Du Linquan gaozhi ji zhaji," 70.
47. Ogawa points out that before its reconstruction in 1082, the Song *Xueshi yuan* was of the second grade in the Song government building-rating system, and the screen painting by Yan Su for the Jade Hall, which was placed between the two columns behind the seat reserved for the emperor, was therefore a six-paneled screen; a twelve-paneled screen painting would have been placed behind the emperor's seat in the main hall of a government office of the first grade. Since the scale of the new *Xueshi yuan* in 1083 was of the first grade, it is reasonable to assume that Guo Xi's screen painting for the Jade Hall had twelve panels. However, based on Guo Si's report, which says that his father finished the screen painting in several days, Ogawa speculates that it might have had only six panels. Ogawa, diagrams 13 and 14; pp. 45–46.
48. Guo Shaoyu, *Song Shihua jiyi*, 35; Ye Mengde, *Shilin yanyu*, 56.
49. Bo Songnian and Chen Shaofeng, "Du Linquan gaozhi ji zhaji," 70.
50. Zhang Junfang 張君房 (fl. 1004), *Yunji qijian* 雲笈七籤, in Xiao Tianshi 蕭天石, comp., *Daozang jinghua* 道藏精華 (Taipei: Ziyu chubanshe, 1978), vol. 1, *juan* 27:402.
51. Cited in Chen Menglei, *Gujin tushu jicheng*, *juan* 192:44b.
52. Su Shi, *Su Dongpo shiji* 蘇東坡詩集 (Shanghai: Saoye shanfang, 1915), *juan* 27:14b. See also Susan Bush and Hsiao-yen Shih, trans., *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1985), 190, which has a different translation from mine. The third and fourth lines of this poem describing Guo Xi's representation are very much in line with Guo Si's description of his father's painting *Spring Mountains*.
53. Wen Fong, *Summer Mountains* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975), entry 29.
54. Yang Rong, *Wenmin ji* 文敏集, *Siku quanshu chenben* 四庫全書珍本 (Taipei: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1975), ser. 4, vol. 319, *juan* 1:41b–42a.
55. Generally speaking, court artists in imperial China produced paintings for the court by following the specifications of theme, composition, and format, among other things, conveyed through their supervisors. However, such talented and reputable painters as Guo Xi, Dong Yu, and Juran enjoyed a certain degree of artistic autonomy with regard to fulfilling imperial or high-level official commissions. They usually did not take detailed instructions from their courtly patrons. On the contrary, it was precisely because of their ability to find unique artistic solutions to their patrons' requests that they were able to gain admiration and favor in the court.
56. In addition to the paintings in the Jade Hall discussed thus far, there were also, among others, a screen painting depicting gibbons by the court painter Yi Yuanji 易元吉 (active 1064–67) and a screen painting of flowers and bamboo by Bao Xun 鮑詢 (contemporary of Guo Xi), who was also a court artist. See Ye Mengde, *Bishu luhua*, *juan* 1:49ab; Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–72), *Ouyang wenzhong gong ji* 歐陽文忠公集 (Shanghai: Hanfen lou, 1933), *juan* 9:22. Since these two paintings were not in the Jade Hall proper, I deliberately omit them from this discussion.

# THE MATTER OF VALUE INSIDE AND OUT: AESTHETIC CATEGORIES IN CONTEMPORARY HINDU TEMPLE ARTS

By SAMUEL K. PARKER

THERE IS A STRIKING DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE AESTHETIC judgments of the living South Indian architects and sculptors who build Hindu temples and academic specialists who write about South Asian art. Art historians have commonly expressed reactions to the aesthetic quality of contemporary work ranging from indifference to contempt. Living practice is often represented as either extinct or so degenerate that it is unworthy of attention. This perspective is reinforced and perpetuated by a disciplinary orientation toward examining imagined relationships among ancient monuments and ancient written sources while ignoring their contemporary, concrete, sociocultural embeddedness. Through this disciplined ignorance, art history participates in a much broader academic tendency to represent non-Western civilizations through celebrations of an imagined past juxtaposed to expressions of dismay or contempt for the living present.<sup>1</sup> For instance, despite the enormous amount of Dravidian temple architecture that has obviously been produced in the twentieth century, Benjamin Rowland writes that the Nayak period is the “final chapter of Dravidian architecture,” in which an “extraordinary dexterity in working, or, perhaps better, torturing, of the stone medium is as much a sign of decadence in sixteenth century India as it is in Italy of the Baroque period.”<sup>2</sup> In one of the most widely used textbooks for introducing Asian art history to undergraduates, Sherman Lee summarily dismisses all post-Chola art in South India as marked by an “almost perverse development of the [entrance] tower [on which] one finds a proliferation of . . . sculpture of such extremely poor quality that we need not examine it.”<sup>3</sup> Even Stella Kramrisch, with all her sensitivity and appreciation of living artisans, has tended to frame the history of Indian art through narratives tracing the development of “classical” excellence followed by “medieval” (and later) aesthetic degeneration.<sup>4</sup> However, even more common than overt dismissal or condemnation is a practice of omission: in the highly relativized multicultural atmosphere of the late twentieth century (in which explicitly critical

crosscultural commentaries invoke heightened political sensitivities) contemporary Hindu temple construction and image-making are not so much explicitly criticized as they are ignored.<sup>5</sup>

In contrast, living South Indian architects and sculptors (who are known by the terms *stapati* and *cirpi* in Tamil, or in Sanskrit, *sthapati* and *śilpi*), surrounded by examples of past monuments appreciated by art historians, almost unanimously proclaim the aesthetic equality (if not superiority) of contemporary work. For example, in an interview with a sculptor at his workshop in the village of Mahabalipuram I asked if he was influenced by the famous ancient sculpture in town.<sup>6</sup> He replied that he looks at it sometimes, but it doesn’t influence him because, aside from the matter of scale, there is no significant difference between his work and ancient Pallava sculpture. He claimed that if there were patrons to provide adequate support, he and his colleagues would produce large projects that are every bit as grand and beautiful as the ancient work in town. I asked why contemporary work is generally considered to be less beautiful than the ancient style—after all, people come to Mahabalipuram to see the old sculpture, not modern work. He replied that the conditions of patronage are to blame: “If a statue isn’t beautiful, it will be the fault of the donor, not the *cirpi*. People come here asking for statues that may cost one or two thousand rupees to make properly, but they are hardly willing to pay even five hundred rupees. We need the work. We can’t afford to refuse them, so we do less refined work.”

In general, *stapatis* and *cirpis* speak of the present as an age of corruption and degeneration, following a conventional “Kali Yuga” narrative frequently deployed in popular South Asian common-sense interpretations of history. However, I found this model to be primarily used in talk about moral decline. When the frame of reference shifted to technology and aesthetics, I generally encountered positive assessments of the present. For instance, a respected senior *stapati* living in the Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu told me: “The present time is the golden age of Indian arts. It is improving by leaps and bounds. In the past they



did everything by hand. It consumed a lot of time. Today with machines we are faster, more polished, and on the whole, better."

### *Internal and External Orientations*

Contemporary architectural and sculptural practice in South India is organized by an implicit semiotic framework of significant differences, represented by cultural categories. Some of the basic terms of this enveloping frame include cultural distinctions of matter, time, space, function, and persons. This framework is not a fixed structure that can be imagined in the older anthropological sense of an ahistorical "traditional culture," but it is a historically fluid process that is itself modified as it continues to generate significance in the context of a developing market economy in South Asia.

For instance, an emerging, categorical distinction is now being made by South Indian *stapatis* and *cirpīs* between images made for *use* (that is, for worship), whose purpose is to house the living power of a deity, and those made for *business* (i.e., retail sales), which are intended primarily for display.<sup>7</sup> This may be understood as the contemporary incarnation of a much more ancient aesthetic distinction expressed some two thousand years ago in the ancient Tamil poetics of the Caṅkam age by the terms *akam* ("interior, heart, household") and *puṇam* ("exterior, outer parts of the body, yard outside the house, public").<sup>8</sup> Ancient *akam* poetry tends to be brief, intimate, and centered on themes of love. *Puṇam* poems tend to be longer, public, and centered on themes of great deeds, heroism, and warfare.<sup>9</sup> In the practice of Tamil temple architecture this distinction corresponds to an analogous contrast between the *karppakkirukam* (Sanskrit: *garbha grha*)—a small, dark, ritually restricted, intimate space for personal devotion located at the center of the temple—and the *kōpuram*—a vast, brightly illuminated structure located at the periphery of the temple complex and covered with public representations of the deity's great deeds. Temple worship effects a personal transformation partly through a transit from the open, public, *puṇam* domain to the intimate, restricted, *akam* domain and back again.<sup>10</sup>

The overt application of the terms *akam* and *puṇam* to sculpture and temple architecture is very limited in ancient and contemporary Tamil

Nadu. The term *akam* is sometimes used to refer to the residence of a god, as seen in the name of the simple roadside shrine located on the road between Madurai and Tirupparankunram and identified by the sign over the doorway as a *Kumārakam*, or an *akam* (residence) of the god Kumāra. This is a very minor association that is in no way limited to temples.<sup>11</sup> *Puṇam* figures in a popular etymology for the term *kōpuram* that analyzes the word as a combination of the Tamil words *kō*, or "lord," and *puṇam*, or "exterior." Such popular etymologies—and they are very common in Tamil Nadu—may be dismissed as spurious by academics, but they serve to provide historical authority to particular interpretive frameworks within popular culture. They can reveal the shifting or contested significance of traditional forms. Here the interpretation is framed by a twentieth-century spirit of Tamil linguistic nationalism. It deliberately opposes an alternative Sanskrit etymology of the same term derived from *go* (cow) and *puram* (city): "the city's cattle-gateway."

In general, however, *akam* and *puṇam* are not now, and never have been, explicitly verbalized as aesthetic principles in written texts on temple architecture. Nevertheless, the distinction is one that can be observed in the cultural background—or the semiotic frame—of architectural practice. Such cultural frames are like the well-worn metaphor of tinted glasses. As backgrounds enveloping focal acts of practice they are so pervasive as to be generally invisible, and yet they constitute necessary conditions for the experience of significant distinctions. Ramanujan suggests that although the ancient distinction of *akam* and *puṇam* is now more implicit than explicit in Tamil rhetoric, it remains relevant to the study of modern fiction and folklore and indispensable to a comprehension of "temple myths, rituals, and other religious expressions."<sup>12</sup> I would only add that *akam* and *puṇam* also seem to be *practiced* as a significant (though not verbalized) distinction in the domain of visual aesthetics and spatial experience in Tamil temple architecture.

A habitual, implicit distinction between fields of *akam* and *puṇam* values has probably been a major factor in the development of the massive, outward-oriented *kōpurams*—as opposed to small, inward-oriented *vimāṇams*—that gradually became characteristic of the Dravidian Hindu temple. During the past thousand years the *kōpuram* has become the most prominent feature of the

conventional Tamil temple complex. The *kōpuram* is virtually all exterior surface, with very little interior space other than a single public passageway through the base of the structure and a stairway (illuminated by openings in the center of each story) kept closed except on rare occasions of ritual reconsecration. Unlike a sanctum, the structural focus of a *kōpuram* is its vast exterior surface, typically used for dramatic *cutai* sculptures representing various aspects of the temple deity—often heroic mythological events analogous to the subject matter of ancient Carikam *puram* poetry. The semiotic “display” function of the *kōpuram* was stressed by a prominent holy man who told me that a *kōpuram* is like a sign that you put out in front of your house to indicate who lives inside.<sup>13</sup> In north India, where the aesthetic distinction between *akam* and *puram* was not salient in the cultural context of practice, the potential differentiation of the interior and outer forms of the temple complex is not nearly so elaborated.<sup>14</sup>

#### *For Worship/For Display: Qualities of Substance and Dimensionality*

McKim Marriott argues that the generation of social distinctions in South Asia is grounded in a dynamic system of differentiated, coded substances.<sup>15</sup> These are represented, for instance, in the characteristics of the three *guṇas*, or elemental qualities/states of matter, and echoed in a vast array of analogous distinctions among social, transactional, spatial, temporal, medical, and other meaningful categories. A set of significant, qualitative distinctions is also made among the alternative materials conventionally used to produce the manufactured residences of gods and goddesses, including, most importantly, their sculpted bodies. The main substances used in producing temple images are, in ranked order, stone, metal, wood, and *cutai* (brick and mortar). A *stapati* living in the Ramnad district of Tamil Nadu who specializes in stone temple construction explained this hierarchy to me as follows:

Of all materials stone has the greatest *cakti*, *pañcalōkam* is second, and wood is third. *Cutai* has no *cakti* at all. The stone *mūlavar* has the greatest power. It is installed with *yantras* and *aṣṭapantaṇam*. . . . The wood *stapatīs* are subordinate to the stone *stapatīs*. Stone is used for *pūjā*, but wood is used only for *vākaṇams* and *ters* . . . [which] are the low slaves of the god. The stone *mūlavar* receives the *pūjās* and *apiṣekams*. They give

their appearance directly. They are never painted like *cutai* or wood.<sup>16</sup>

The specific details of comments like this might be contested by other *stapatīs* and *cirpīs*—after all, this comment was made by a stone carver—yet the assumptions and elements of the discourse (for example, hierarchy, substance, function, location, and durability) are shared. This comment about materials implies a system of social distinctions among people who work in those materials. In fact, the traditional, fivefold division of the Visvakarma caste (hereditary makers of things) in Tamil Nadu correlates with the different substances they fashion.<sup>17</sup> Differences in substance serve loosely to indicate a general set of social distinctions between persons of relatively higher, exclusive status who make or use images at the heart of a temple and those of lower status who make figures primarily for outward display, for members of the general public who, in former days, were only permitted to experience the external appearance of the temple.

Stone is used for the most important parts of contemporary temples to the extent that available funds permit. Sometimes only the *mūlavar* (the body of the god that is fixed in the sanctum) and the *praṇāla* (drain spout) are made of stone. When funds are more plentiful, stone will also be used for the lower portion of the sanctum (*kalkāram*). If funding is abundant, the porches (*maṇṭapams*), *kalkārams* of *kōpurams* and circumambulatory structures (*pirākāram*) may all be made of stone. Accomplished architects and sculptors are very sensitive connoisseurs of stone. An initial superficial evaluation is made on the basis of appearance—especially color—but subtler distinctions of quality are based on auditory characteristics. The best stone is said to be a black granite that produces a clear, metallic ring when struck with a chisel. This is the stone of choice for the *mūlavar*, an example of which is shown in figure 1. Inferior kinds of granite are acceptable for *varkka vēlai* (the architectural fabric of a temple) or for stone images located on the outer, peripheral surfaces of a temple complex. Nowadays marble is imported to Tamil Nadu from Rajasthan for the execution of images commissioned by North Indians. In discussions with Tamil sculptors I have often heard this stone characterized as softer, less resonant, less durable, and possessing less *cakti* than the granite of Tamil Nadu. This claim parallels analogous comments





FIG. 1. Unfinished *mūlavar* representing Ādi Śaṅkarācārya. Contemporary. Madras. Photo: author.

they have made to me about the generally inferior quality of the images and temples being made in North India today.

*Pañcatōkam*, a kind of bronze made of five metals (typically identified as copper, zinc, lead, gold, and silver), is considered the proper substance for the *utsavar*: the body of the god that moves through the streets on festival occasions (fig. 8). These five metals are said to connote the universality of the divine body as a combination of the five elements (*pañcapūtam*) that exhaustively constitute the world. However, I have found no consensus that there is, or even should be, a one-to-one correspondence between specific metals and elements.

The *mūlavar* and *utsavar* are both intended as focal points for worship. Their bodies are made of hard, dense substances suitable for *apiṣṣkam* (ritual bathing). Their relative status is based on spatiotemporal distinctions between that which is central, fixed, and constant and that which is peripheral, movable, and intermittent.



FIG. 2. Unfinished *kōpurantāṅki*. Contemporary. Madhya Kailash temple, Madras. Photo: author.

The *mūlavar* and *utsavar* contrast with another set of images made of less durable, more porous substances—*cutai* (brick and mortar), wood, terracotta, and paint. These materials produce relatively less suitable bodies for the incarnation of deities. They cannot endure frequent ritual bathing, and being softer and less dense, they disintegrate faster than stone or *pañcatōkam*. Furthermore, images made of these substances are often relief sculptures and correspondingly less potent than the fully three-dimensional forms of the *mūlavar* and *utsavar*. Paintings and relief sculptures in mortar or wood are not conventionally used as primary focal points for *pūjā* in temple complexes (though certain popular icons may be singled out for special gestures of devotion by the visiting public). They serve as signs that qualify the status and identity of the stone deity installed in the sanctum. *Stapatis* and *cirpis* typically classify such images as *upacirpa* and identify their purpose as “display.”

Obviously, paint may be used to make the

image of a divine body, yet because it has the form of a thin, two-dimensional veneer, it is a less adequate vessel for the incarnation of a deity than a three-dimensional form. At the government architecture and sculpture training institute at Mahabalipuram the relatively low status of painting in contemporary Tamil temple arts is clearly marked.<sup>18</sup> The painting program is the only option at the institute open to women. All the other specializations—architecture, stone, *cutai*, and wood—may lead to a BSc degree, whereas painting is limited to a three-year, terminal “diploma” program. While the painting students are permitted to indulge their fantasies and copy images out of books, students in the serious specializations must adhere to very strict iconographic and metrical standards.

This does not mean that paintings are completely devoid of power. Even the printed image of a god or goddess on a calendar possesses some degree of that deity’s power. This lower level of power is actually desirable in certain contexts. For instance, unless they are exceptionally devout, Tamil householders generally avoid keeping three-dimensional stone or metal images in a household shrine. A housewife once explained to me that although a two-dimensional image is far less powerful, the more powerful the deity, the more demanding and onerous is the responsibility of the householder (as host) to provide food, dress, entertainment, and all the appropriate honors represented by the act of *pūjā*. Two-dimensional images are satisfied with much less.<sup>19</sup>

Relief sculptures represent an intermediate

value located between two and three dimensions. If they are made of stone, they are occasionally adopted for specific acts of *pūjā*. Visitors to South Indian temples are likely to encounter images carved on stone pillars—typically popular deities like Gaṇapati, Aṅcanēr, or Murugaṇ—that have obviously received *apiṣēkam* (ritual bathing) and *alaṅkāram* (ritual ornamentation). The blackened surface, flowers, vermillion powder, incense, and other material traces of *pūjā* on such images are, for a devotee, indexical signs of their power. They often signify a direct transaction between the deity and the devotee, unmediated by Brahman authority. *Cutai* or wooden images of the same deities, even where they are readily accessible to visitors, are rarely adopted for these more intensive acts of devotion.

Relief sculpture made of *cutai* is often located on the outer surfaces of a *kōpuram* or a *vimānam*, high above eye level (fig. 2). Such *cutai* figures must be made clearly visible from a distance. The primary signs of this visibility are bright colors, bold contrasts, deeply incised lines, greater stylization of details, and more exaggerated emotional expression than comparable sculpture in stone or *paṇcatōkam*. *Cutai* images are primarily made for public display within the outer, or *puram*, context. They are often called *pommais*, or “dolls,” in reference to their lack of power. They are not as strictly subject to the iconographic and metrical conventions of the stone *mūlavar* and *paṇcatōkam utsavar*. Accordingly, *cutai* figures may be produced with greater degrees of fantasy and stylistic variation, as in figures 3 and 4. Figure 3



FIG. 3. *Kōpurantānikis* representing Europeans wearing underwear. Twentieth century. Tirucculi. Photo: author.



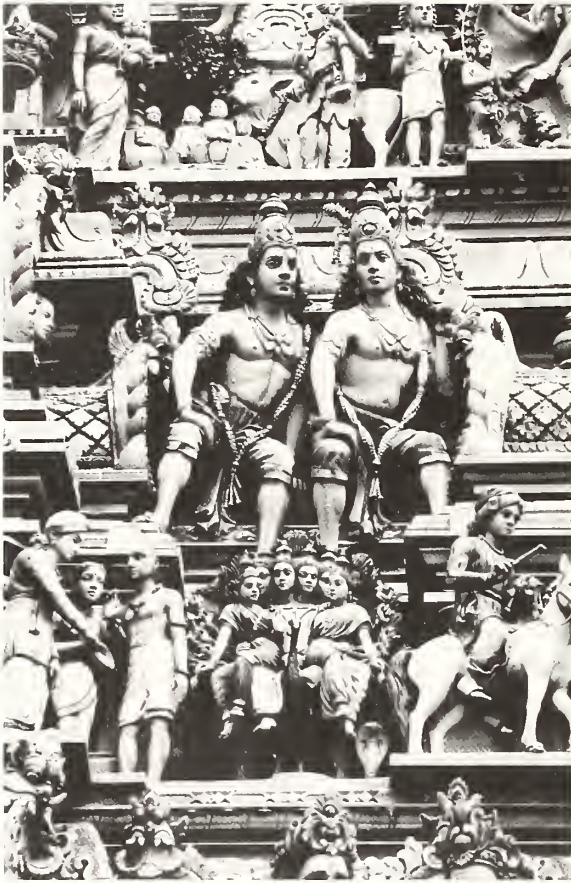


FIG. 4. *Kōpurantāṅkis*. Contemporary. Kapālīśwara temple, Madras. Photo: author.

represents Europeans wearing underwear serving the role of *kōpurantāṅki* (or *kōpuram* supporters). Figure 4 represents the experiment of a *stapati* who claims to have deliberately instructed his *cirpis* to use a European style of sculpture exhibiting anatomical details for this particular project (this style is atypical of his, and their, work). Another *stapati* criticized the sculpture on this *kōpuram*, telling me that the representation of bones and muscles signifies poverty, death, ill-health, and other inauspicious qualities.<sup>20</sup>

Flexibility of subject matter or style can, over time, move from *cutai* relief figures high up on a tower down into the domain of stone figures. For instance, one contemporary stone sculpture from Andhra Pradesh (fig. 5) was criticized by a Tamil *stapati* for its use of a casual, more naturalistic “*cutai* style” in stone.<sup>21</sup>

Figures 6 and 7 illustrate a contrast of style between ancient images related to their respective locations on the same temple (which in this case is the early eleventh-century Brihadīśwara



FIG. 5. *Maṇṭapam* pillar. Contemporary. Vīrabrahmaśwami Maṭam, Andhra Pradesh. Photo: author.

temple in Tanjore). Both sculptures are made of stone, but one is located on the temple’s outer wall, the other up on the tower. The figures on the tower are more linear and stylized compared to those located closer to eye level on the wall. The higher image anticipates later trends toward stylization and emotional exaggeration in Tamil sculpture, while the lower figure is more strongly reminiscent of earlier Chola and Pallava work.<sup>22</sup> These instances suggest that stylistic changes tend to occur first in the more loosely controlled context of images made primarily for external (*puṇam*) domains, where visibility is the dominant consideration. Over time these changes may show up in stone and metal figures made for focal acts of *pūjā* within enclosed (*akam*) environments. In other words, contemporary practices suggest that historically in Tamil Nadu, stylistic features generally make their way from periphery to center, from *puṇam* to *akam* contexts: from the outward-facing heights toward the inner sanctum. If historical research bears out the general consistency



FIG. 6. Śiva. Early eleventh century.  
Wall of Brihadīśwara temple, Tanjore. Photo: author.

of this process, it could serve as one possible frame for constructing historical narratives based on observations of contemporary practice.

### *For Pūjā/For Sale as a Variant of an Akam/Puṇam Distinction*

The ancient aesthetic distinction between *akam* and *puṇam* in Tamil culture is not explicitly mentioned in the discourse of contemporary practitioners, nor was it written down in any of the known *ākamams* (Sanskrit: *āgama*) or *cirpa cāstirams* (Sanskrit: *śilpaśāstra*). However, it is a major, recognizable part of the implicit cultural background that continues to provide order and significance to sculptural and architectural practice in Tamil Nadu. Bronze casting is a good case in point. During the past thirty years the makers of bronze images have developed a retail market for their work. Accordingly, a distinction has emerged between figures made for use, or *pūjā*, and those



FIG. 7. Kumāra. Early eleventh century.  
Tower of Brihadīśwara temple, Tanjore. Photo: author.

made as “show pieces” for “business,” or “sale.”<sup>23</sup> This contrast, too, may be understood to emerge from the more ancient distinction between images made for the more interior, *akam* environment of worship and the more exterior, *puṇam* domain of display. For example, figures 8 and 9 represent a contrast between a metal image made for worship and one made for retail sales. A series of aesthetic distinctions signifies a contrast in the valorization of these statues:

#### INTERIOR/EXTERIOR (AKAM/PURAM)

Figure 8 is an image of Murugan, accompanied by one of his two consorts, made of solid *pañcalōkam* for a temple commission. Because it is made for *pūjā*, it is intended to be a material body—a vessel—in which Murugan is to be incarnated as a living presence. As with any container, its purpose is to provide an interior (*akam*) volume of space. In this sense the image is analogous to a sanctum, intended to provide a residence for the divine power on earth. In contrast, figure 9





FIG. 8. Murukan and consort. Contemporary. Swamimalai. Photo: author.

was made for retail sale and is correspondingly intended primarily for the display of its outer (*puzam*) surface. Its surface orientation is further expressed by the deliberately applied patina, intended to mimic the antique images that serve as a reference point of value for the retail market. On the other hand, the surface of figure 8 is polished, reflecting the luminous, subtle substance of divine bodies which serve as a reference of value for images of worship. The brightness of freshly polished *pañcalōkam* is a feature that *stapatis* typically identify as “beautiful.” In contrast, dullness, signs of decay and neglect—such as the patina on a statue—are often identified as “ugly” characteristics.

#### SOLID/HOLLOW

Unlike the solid *pañcalōkam* form required for *pūjā*, figure 9 is only a hollow shell of metal around a clay core. I encountered unanimous agreement among Tamil sculptors that only a solid image is fit for *pūjā*. For instance, in response to my question one sculptor pointed to



FIG. 9. Śiva dancing with the corpse of Sati in a retail store. Contemporary. Swamimalai. Photo: author.

his own chest and said incredulously, “Is the body hollow? How can you worship a hollow body?” On another occasion I asked what would happen if one used a clay-core statue for *pūjā*. The *stapati* replied, “You would be worshipping dirt” (*maṇ*). Since an icon produced for the retail market is intended only as a “show piece,” the integrity of the body matters less than the lower production costs of clay-core images.

#### PAÑCALŌKAM/BRONZE

The luminous substance of figure 8 is an alloy of five metals (corresponding to the five elements constituting the universe) called *pañcalōkam*, indicating the cosmological significance of the divine body. Figure 9 is made of a cheaper bronze alloy consisting of only copper, zinc, and lead (gold and silver are excluded).

#### SACRIFICIAL EXCHANGE/MARKET EXCHANGE

Images made for retail sales are designed to minimize costs and maximize monetary returns, consistent with the values of a capitalist market-

place. A solid *pañcatōkam* image represents a grossly inefficient use of materials from this perspective. *Pañcatōkam* is deployed within a very different domain, where the maximization of meaning within an economics of sacrificial exchange provides a context for the production of value.

#### TRADITION/INVENTION

The images intended for worship in figure 8 are made according to the traditional body of knowledge called *cāstiram*.<sup>24</sup> In contrast, figure 9 is an allegedly new iconic form representing Śiva dancing with the corpse of Sati. The first such icon produced in recent memory by a Tamil sculptor was made in the village of Swamimalai in the 1960s, at a time when *stapatis* were being encouraged by the government to produce icons for retail sales. The *cāstirams* have continued to be the basic formal and symbolic resource for this practice, yet the absence of strict ritual constraints has permitted, and in some cases actively encouraged, greater inventiveness. However, even when making images for the market, *stapatis* use their traditional formal and metrical vocabulary, and most include at least some minor ritual gestures to encourage success. The Indian English term *imagination piece* is often used by sculptors in reference to unconventional icons made for retail sale. In my experience, “imagination piece” is typically the phrase used when an image is being dismissed as inconsequential or powerless, as in “this is *only* [or *merely*] an imagination piece.”

The iconic type illustrated in figure 9 has now entered the repertoire of Tamil bronzes. It has been in use long enough that it is not dismissed as a “mere imagination piece,” but it is never made for worship.<sup>25</sup> The son of the *stapati* who made the first such figure in Swamimalai expresses pride in his father’s work. He told me that a university researcher from Tanjore conducted an exhaustive search and had uncovered no precedents for this icon. He says that the attention and praise his father received from this outside authority inspired other *stapatis* in Swamimalai to start producing this icon for the marketplace. It is significant that it was not the practice of invention that others imitated but the form itself.

*Stapatis* with higher status in the community have first choice of commissions and tend to specialize as far as possible in producing images for temples. Those with less prestige have to rely more on production for retail sales. One successful *stapati* stressed moral, emotional, and prestige

factors in explaining his decision to limit his practice strictly to religious commissions. He argued that a *stapati* can only achieve peace of mind and spiritual merit through the performance of his religious duty. The prestige of producing religious commissions is shadowed by a vague social stigma attached to producing images for the market. For example, a *stapati* once confessed that he had lied to me about the number of his temple commissions when we first met because he was embarrassed to admit that such a large percentage of his work was destined for retail shops in Madras.

Even though a *stapati* can usually make more money producing for the marketplace, he has to face the constant pressures and manipulations of “middlemen,” who seem to be universally despised for their alleged greed, dishonesty, and most of all, their attempts to interfere and control the *stapati*’s practice. “You have to dance to their tune,” said the accountant of one successful *stapati*. Middlemen constantly press issues of efficiency, deadlines, and cost-cutting into a practice steeped in the massively “inefficient” economics of sacrificial exchange.

#### Aesthetic Domains

The emergence of a retail market does not signify a simple disintegration of this tradition. The emerging distinction between images made for worship and those made for the marketplace is not simply a new, unprecedented development. It represents a modification of the preexisting categories of images made for worship and those made primarily for display, which in turn is a variant of the ancient categories of *akam* and *puṇam*: a qualitative, aesthetic distinction between that which is intimate and interior and that which is public and exterior. In the semiotic system of contemporary Tamil temple architecture, signs made primarily for “display” (*pommais* or *upacirpa*) are addressed to a spatial domain that in Tamil may be expressed as *puṇam* (or outer); those made for *pūjā* are addressed to the opposite spatial domain: *akam* (or interior). Within the temple’s *akam* environment, images tend to be more durable, three-dimensional, and more strictly conventional, signaling the relative reality—in the temporal sense of “enduring”—characteristic of the spatial center. In the *puṇam* context they tend toward less restricted relief sculpture or two-dimensional forms rendered in more ephemeral



substances, signaling the relatively less real status of the revolving periphery.

Contemporary market forces are subordinated to the historical semiotic logic of the tradition. In the process, however, those semiotic categories are themselves being stretched and adjusted to accommodate new contexts of value: the distinction once identified as *akam* and *puṇam* may now be expressed in an analogous distinction between production for worship and production for “mere” display. This practice is not simply becoming Westernized, impure, or corrupt; rather, it is being dialectically modified according to its own internal values and historical trajectory in response to changing circumstances.

My account of this South Indian cultural frame is necessarily grounded in yet *another* frame belonging to the (perhaps peculiar) culture of what Pierre Bourdieu has appropriately called “Homo Academicus.” This sociocultural domain provides authoritative channels of communication through which academics may represent the culture that produces Hindu temples, and yet opportunities for the reverse are very limited (an example of this, however, may be observed in the irreverent representation of Europeans in fig. 3). In the absence of conditions for a perfect dialogue, I have tried to follow the relatively less perfect course of drawing the basic constituents of my academic metaframe from contemporary practice and the ancient aesthetic tradition of the Tamils.

I confess that as an anthropologist with a graduate degree in art history my own aesthetic preferences differ considerably from those of the contemporary Tamil *stapatis* and *cizpis* I encountered in my fieldwork. While I prefer the sculpture at Kalagumalai, Mahabalipuram, Tiruvalisvaram, the Nageswarasvami at Kumbakonam, and the Tiruvenkadu bronzes, my informants consistently expressed preferences for the intricacies of Hoysala sculpture, the vast complexity of Nayak monuments, and the costly ambitions of contemporary monumental work at Tirupati. My own taste is typical of European and American academics (South Asian scholars also learn similar preferences as part of the price of admission to international academic credibility). As Bourdieu has argued in the context of his detailed sociological study of taste in France, aesthetic judgments are not so much personal as they are an expression of one’s identification with sociocultural categories, such as class, occupation, or

ethnicity.<sup>26</sup> This does not necessarily oblige the academic to change his or her aesthetic judgments, but it does make them problematic. They cannot masquerade as “objective” representations of any sort of “authentic,” indigenous aesthetic response.

Academics who specialize in the ancient arts of South Asia are placed in a predicament by the absence of indigenous aesthetic judgments of specific works in ancient South Asian texts. Aesthetic concepts like *rasa*, *dvani*, *akam*, and *puṇam* are discussed in such abstract, philosophical terms that they do not really provide independent indigenous grounds for legitimizing the academic canon of historically significant monuments in South Asia. Historically, that indigenous authority was provided in the living person of Ananda Coomaraswamy, whose felicitous combination of scholarly skills and mixed ethnic background enabled him personally to speak with the authority of “The South Asian Tradition.” Of course, it is widely acknowledged these days that his own aesthetic judgments were indebted as much to the Victorian arts and crafts movement as to his immersion in South Asian traditions. Coomaraswamy’s project could be interpreted as less concerned with ancient India *per se* than with creating idealized representations of *ancient* India that could serve as a critique of *contemporary* Western civilization. In so doing he participated in the anthropological project of cultural critique that has always been among the most promising aims of crosscultural research.<sup>27</sup>

Within the modern disciplinary tradition Coomaraswamy largely shaped, academic judgments of South Asian arts continue to be neither South Asian nor entirely European or American. They represent an amalgam of Western and South Asian contexts shared by a statistically minute portion of the population whose controlled access to prestigious media of representation (primarily books and peer-reviewed journals like this one) confer distinction and authority upon their aesthetic judgments. It is rarely necessary even to make these judgments explicit. They are most powerfully represented through the very acts of inclusion and exclusion that regulate access to research funding and publication. Graduate students are likely to be discouraged from pursuing research on material that is conventionally considered to have little aesthetic merit in academic circles. If they persist, they may encounter further resistance from panels of specialists who

control access to limited research funds or publication. Given this enormously powerful regulatory system, it is hardly surprising that a very consistent body of ancient South Asian material has been defined as aesthetically meritorious and worthy of research while another corpus is implicitly excluded—notably, recent and contemporary work that lacks the alibi of naivete (that is, not classed as “folk art”).

What makes the aesthetic judgments of the academic art historian more (or less) authoritative or legitimate than those of the Tamil *stapati* or *cirpi*? Is there nothing but a distinction of social power and politics embodied in my preference for the ninth-century sculpture of the Nageswarasvami temple over the twentieth-century sculpture at Tirupati? I would like to think so, but I cannot honestly appeal to any “objective” (that is, socially transcendent) criteria to provide my aesthetic judgments with a privileged authority. The art historical canon represents the aesthetic judgments of a professional group that has appropriated this material within the ongoing reproduction of the academy (which perpetuates itself through the construction—and occasional critique—of disciplines, departments, research,

writing, and professional careers). This practice is *not* centrally concerned with the ongoing reproduction of careers in the practice of constructing Hindu temples, and it is only indirectly connected (via contemporary traces and imaginings) to the lived experience of ancient practice.

A major implication of this is, I believe, that we academics must acknowledge the culturally contingent character of our aesthetic preferences and expand our practice toward sympathetic understandings of contemporary indigenous aesthetics, in South Asia and elsewhere, regardless of whether we find them distasteful or not. Contemporary temple builders in South India have a legitimate claim to interpret and assess contemporary and ancient South Asian monuments according to a field of interests and significance that is mostly independent of academic careers and conventions. The relative independence of this domain should not be taken as an excuse to ignore it. On the contrary, it can potentially serve as an alternative cultural resource through which we can critique our own practice and expand the range and depth of our comprehension and appreciation of South Asian images and architecture.



## Notes

I would like to thank Fulbright-Hays and the American Institute of Indian Studies for funding the research upon which this paper is based.

1. See E. Said, "The Text, the World, the Critic," in *Textual Strategies*, ed. J. Harari (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979). Academic authority over the past has been facilitated by the fact that natives who may have had alternative claims over its interpretation are safely dead. Ethnography, in the living present, is a far more messy arena in which to stake a claim to speak with credibility. However, in the late twentieth century even the past is becoming more problematic as the former so-called "peoples without history" increasingly challenge the authority of academic representations of their pasts.
2. Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India* (1953; rpt., Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), 319.
3. Sherman Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art* (New York: Abrams, 1982), 216–17.
4. E.g., Stella Kramrisch, *The Art of India* (1954; rpt., London: Phaidon, 1965), 44–45, or Stella Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture* (1933; rpt., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1981), 119–21.
5. There are a number of recent exceptions to this tendency. Rick Asher, Gary Tartakov, Michael Meister, Joanna Williams, Mary Linda, Mary Beth Heston, to name a few, have all adopted varying degrees of ethnographic practice and awareness in their research. This trend promises to introduce a dramatic shift in the practice of South Asian art historians away from the "objective" (or more accurately, "objectifying") practice of crosscultural appropriation, most baldly expressed in the paradigm of "documenting and cataloging," toward context-sensitive models of interpretation grounded in a practice of crosscultural dialogue.
6. Mahabalipuram is the type-site for ancient Pallava sculpture of the seventh and eighth centuries. In the late 1950s a government architecture and sculpture training institute was established in the village to support the continuing, but then languishing, tradition of Dravidian temple architecture. A period of study at the Mahabalipuram school has been incorporated as an episode within a much longer period of conventional apprenticeship. Over the years a number of former students have established workshops in the village. They fill orders for temple commissions and images destined for private worship. They also typically display a selection of ready-made images to take advantage of the abundant tourist traffic.
7. The emerging distinction between the categories "for *pūjā*/use" and "for sales/display" is naturally strongest in the case of substances used for icons intended for worship: metal festival images (*utsavars*) and fully three-dimensional stone figures made for installation in a sanctum (*mūlavars*). The weight of emphasis in the case of other substances—wood, paint, brick and mortar (*cutai*)—has always tended toward display anyway. This is not to say that images of *cutai*, paint, or wood are not worshipped in certain contexts, but they are certainly not the conventional substances used for images to be installed in a temple sanctum or taken out in procession.
8. See A. K. Ramanujan, *Poems of Love and War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 231–96, for an excellent discussion of *akam* and *puṇam* as aesthetic categories in ancient Tamil poetics.
9. Ramanujan, *Poems*.
10. Although this is a categorical distinction, it is fundamentally concrete. As with all the terms in a semiotic of practice, they represent positions within graded continua. They are not abstract, unmediated logical oppositions.
11. The term *akam* also occurs on commercial signs to indicate the abode of one or another enterprise.
12. Ramanujan, *Poems*, 296.
13. His title is conventionally transliterated as the "Jeer of Ahobila Mutt" by English language media sources in Tamil Nadu. He is a Telegu holy man who rose to public prominence in the 1970s and 1980s as the driving force behind the completion of the south *kōpuram* of the temple at Srirangam. See S. K. Parker, "Contemporary Temple Construction in South India: The Srirangam Rajagopuram," *Res* 21 (1992): 110–23.
14. Although there will almost certainly not be an ancient written text to "prove" the point, this topic might be a fruitful space for historical research and culturally sensitive interpretation.
15. McKim Marriott, "Hindu Transactions: Diversity without Dualism," in *Transactions and Meaning*, ed. B. Kapferer (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1976).
16. Following the ethical conventions of fieldwork in anthropology I am obliged to maintain the confi-

dentiality of my informants' identities. I am fully aware of many problematic dimensions of this convention—especially perhaps for art historians for whom an artist's name is of great significance. However, for a number of reasons it was a necessary requirement of the research on which this paper is based.

17. See A. E. Roberts, *Viśvakarma and His Descendants* (1909; rpt., Chikkaballapura, Karnataka: Sri Jnanananda Ashram, 1973) and E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Madras: Government Press, 1909). The Viśvakarmas represent themselves as the descendants of the five mind-born sons of the divine artificer Viśvakarma: the iron worker Maṇu, the carpenter Mayaṇ, the brass worker Tuvaṣṭā, Cilpi the temple builder (whose work includes stone, brick and mortar), and the the goldsmith Visvakṇaṇ (who works with gems and precious metals).
18. These relative values are probably not limited to Tamil temple builders. For example, once on a bus trip to Ajanta a Hindi speaker encouraged me to skip Ajanta and head straight for Ellora. He explained, "At Ajanta you will only get pictures, but at Ellora you will get statues."
19. In the course of my fieldwork I did encounter several cases where a household took on the responsibilities of worshipping a stone or *pañcatōkam* image. In one spectacular case a wealthy elderly Brahman was constructing a huge Kāmāṭci temple on the grounds of his estate at the advice of the Kanchipuram Śankarācharya (the image of Ādi Śankarācharya in fig. 2 was carved for a subsidiary shrine of this temple).
20. This comment is also framed by the fact that the critic in this case is a Viśvakarma *stapati* and the person being criticized is a well-known non-Viśvakarma *stapati*, whose success in winning important contracts has not endeared him to the Viśvakarma community.
21. In part, this criticism seemed intended to signify, for my benefit, the ignorance and poor quality of Telegu-speaking *cirpis*. In other words, in my role as a foreign researcher, I should devote my attention to the merits of *Tamil* stone carvers and not waste my time in Andhra Pradesh.
22. The deliberate nature of such a contrast can only be argued in the case of an all-stone temple like this one. Most ancient temples have *cutai* towers that have been repeatedly renovated over the centuries, in which cases the difference in style is motivated by history as much as position in space. Incidentally, here is an ancient precedent for the use of a "*cutai* style" executed in stone, but in my experience Tamil *stapatīs* express nothing but praise for this work.
23. Even among those practitioners who do not speak English, the Indian English terms *show pieces*, *imagination pieces*, and *business* are typically used to indicate the category of figures made for retail sales.
24. These icons were made according to *cāstiram*, and yet no books were involved in their production in any way. Western and South Asian academics normally use the term *cāstiram* in reference to a set of named, ancient texts. In contrast, South Indian practitioners generally use the word *cāstiram* in reference to a general body of authoritative traditional knowledge, not to written texts with specific names. As an idiom of discourse, appeals to the authority of *cāstiram* are routine and nonspecific. There are many specialists who are considered masters of *cāstiram* and yet are barely literate in Tamil, let alone Sanskrit. Mastery of *cāstiram* is primarily a function of the *practice* of fabrication, not of reading.
25. Despite the fact that sculptors in Swamimalai consider this to be an iconic form of recent invention, there are ancient precedents for the type in South India. A twelfth- to thirteenth-century example in the Government Museum, Trivendram, Kerala, is illustrated in M. Pallottino, ed., *Encyclopedia of World Art*, vol. 7, pl. 227.
26. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction* (1979; trans., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).
27. See G. Marcus and M. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).





# ANICONISM AND THE MULTIVALENCE OF EMBLEMS: ANOTHER LOOK

By SUSAN L. HUNTINGTON

[The author recommends that prior to reading this essay the interested individual read Susan L. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art and the Theory of Aniconism," *Art Journal* 49, no. 4 (Winter 1990): 401–8; the letter to the editor by Michael Rabe in response to that article and Susan L. Huntington's reply to the letter in *Art Journal* 51, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 125–27; and then Vidya Dehejia's "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems," *Ars Orientalis* 21 (1991): 45–66. See also Susan L. Huntington, with contributions by John C. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India* (New York and Tokyo: John Weatherhill, Inc., 1985), 70–71, 72–73, 87, 98–99, 100.]

## Introduction

AT THE INVITATION OF THE EDITORS OF *ARS ORIENTALIS*, I am responding to the article by Vidya Dehejia entitled "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems" published in *Ars Orientalis*, volume 21.<sup>1</sup> The stated purpose of Dehejia's article is to demonstrate and advocate that early Buddhist art was multivalent, that is, imbued with multiple meanings that could be conveyed by individual emblems (45). A second, unstated purpose of the article is to challenge some of the ideas I have presented regarding the long-held theory of aniconism that has been used to interpret these early Buddhist materials for more than a century. At the same time that Dehejia challenges aspects of my work, she incorporates into her multivalency theory one of the most important contributions of my analysis—my explanation of a certain type of composition as focusing on Buddhist sacred sites. Although her multivalency theory upholds the abiding belief in the aniconic theory, her interpretation of early Buddhist art is tempered by accepting my proposal that not all of the works of art that have been interpreted as aniconic images are aniconic.

I agreed to write this response for two reasons. First, although Dehejia's theory of multivalency offers an interesting and clever amalgam of the traditional aniconic theory and my own ideas and seeks to move the interpretation of early Buddhist art in a new direction, I am not convinced that multivalency, as she has presented the case, is a viable alternative to the previously proposed

viewpoints. Second, I wish to respond to her criticisms of my work. Because I examine the theory of aniconism and related iconographical, historical, social, religious, and cultural issues in my forthcoming book on the early Buddhist art of India, I will not use this forum to present the extensive materials I have collected. Rather, here I will deal specifically with problems in the way my work has been interpreted and applied in Dehejia's article. Although I believe that Dehejia's reactions to my research are premature since my full study has not yet been published,<sup>2</sup> it is important at this stage to correct misunderstandings and misrepresentations of my work. Further, since in a number of instances Dehejia actually argues for my viewpoint without acknowledging her indebtedness to my work, I welcome the opportunity to clarify the derivation of some of her interpretations.

Let me state at the outset that I have never claimed nor intended to claim that there are no "aniconic" works of art. In fact, I specifically allow for the possibility.<sup>3</sup> My position is that the theory of aniconism is not valid as an all-inclusive explanation for the early Buddhist art of India and that the vast majority of artistic compositions that have been explained as aniconic scenes are not substitutes and do not portray substitutes for anthropomorphic representations of a Buddha. What I propose is that the explanatory power of the aniconic theory has been vastly overestimated and that the theory has been indiscriminately applied, much to the detriment of our understanding of early Buddhist art and its religious meanings and cultural contexts. My book will propose a series of new generalizations based on patterns of evidence, rather than a new absolutist theory. In light of what will be my reinterpretation of the vast majority of reliefs, I believe that the monuments and the practices of early Buddhism will also require renewed study.

To clarify to readers where my work on early Buddhist art has been published, I first questioned the validity of the theory of aniconism as an all-embracing explanation for the art of early Buddhism in my *Art of Ancient India*.<sup>4</sup> In that context, I was not able to present more than a few



basic components of my larger research project since the theme of the *Art of Ancient India* was the development of the art of the Indic world over many centuries, and a lengthy digression on the problem of aniconism would have been a detour from the main theme of the book. I also published an article in the *Art Journal* in which I chose one specific type of image to discuss. I wish to emphasize "one specific type" because Dehejia has apparently misunderstood that article to represent a comprehensive, rather than selective, presentation of my ideas regarding the scenes appearing in early Buddhist art, an important point to which I shall return. Since that article was solicited to appear in an issue of the *Art Journal* devoted to the presentation of current research in the field, the paper had to fulfill certain editorial criteria that applied to all authors whose work had been selected for publication. Specifically, I was limited in terms of the number of words and illustrations, which had to conform to the space allotted to the other authors, and I was asked to write the article in a way that would interest readers outside the specialized field of South Asian art. Therefore, for the *Art Journal* article I chose to present a component of my study that could stand alone. Interestingly, this particular component of my larger study—the identification of reliefs that represent worship scenes at sacred Buddhist sites—is one that Dehejia adopts in her article (without, however, acknowledging me as the source of the notion).

In addition to these two publications, I have made a number of oral presentations on aspects of my work. These include papers at the 1988 and 1991 conferences sponsored by the American Committee for South Asian Art. These papers were strictly limited in length and could only address very narrow aspects of my study; thus, some of Dehejia's misunderstandings of my research may have arisen from these presentations as well.<sup>5</sup> While the 1988 talk emphasized the materials ultimately published in the *Art Journal* article, the 1991 presentation specifically targeted the historiography of the theory of aniconism, a subject that I believe is intimately related to the passionate advocacy of the theory that my critics so commonly display. I have given lengthier presentations of my work at the conference of the International Association for Buddhist Studies in Paris during summer 1991 and in invited talks at Harvard University's Center for the Advanced Study of World Religions in spring 1990 and at

the University of Chicago in spring 1987, to name just a few.<sup>6</sup>

### *Critique of Dehejia's Article: Structural and Theoretical*

#### MULTIVALENCY

The stated purpose of Dehejia's article is to demonstrate and advocate that early Buddhist art was imbued with multiple, simultaneous meanings that could be conveyed by individual emblems (45). The theoretical concept of multivalence is one that I not only endorse but applaud, as attested by my introduction of the term *śleṣa*, which Dehejia uses to explain the notion of multivalence, in my *Art of Ancient India* (1985).<sup>7</sup> The idea of multiple meanings in works of art is a concept that I have published elsewhere, lectured about in public, and extensively incorporate into my teaching, as my students are well aware. John C. Huntington has also used the concept of multivalence to explain works of art. His forthcoming article entitled "The Iconography of Barabudur Revisited: The Concept of *Śleṣa* (Multivalent Symbolism) and the Sarva-[buddha]kāya as Applied to the Remaining Problems" has been in press since 1988, evidencing his subscription to the notion for at least the past five years.<sup>8</sup> Further, he explains the term *śleṣa* in detail in his article entitled "Pilgrimage as Image," which Dehejia cites in her *Ars Orientalis* essay for other purposes.<sup>9</sup>

Although I have advocated that multiple meanings are simultaneously inherent in many works of Indic art, I do not believe that the theory of multivalence that Dehejia proposes offers a viable alternative either to the traditional theory of aniconism or to the ideas that I am presenting in my own work that challenge the aniconic theory. A careful reading of her article reveals that the logic she has used in applying this principle to the early Buddhist artistic remains undermines the credibility of her scheme. She reasons in her first paragraph that if the technique of double meanings was employed by writers, the concept would have been known to visual artists and employed by them as well.<sup>10</sup> While this is possible, it cannot be automatically assumed that there is a positive correlation between different media, such as literature and the visual arts, in every time and place. With regard to the early Buddhist

materials one must ask: Were literary techniques that employed *double entendre* or other multiplicities of meaning in vogue (or even in use) at the time the art monuments under discussion were created? And, if they were, can we document linkages between the literary and visual arts during that period? If Dehejia's multivalent interpretations are predicated upon an analogy with literary techniques, a definite correlation must be found between the media at the time. If she is using the literary analogy to suggest a kind of generalized cultural milieu, then it is necessary that she unequivocally demonstrate the presence of multivalency within the art works themselves. My analysis of her article demonstrates that in a majority of cases (if not all), her proofs of multiple meanings are speculative or, if verifiable, do not apply to the degree and in the manner she suggests. Further, even if her interpretation of multivalency could be shown to be valid—and I suggest that it is not—her assertion regarding its importance for the theory of aniconism seems greatly exaggerated. Her claim that “As soon as we accept the validity of such a system [of multivalency] . . . aniconism ceases to be such a vexed problem” (47) vastly oversimplifies the complex religious, social, cultural, and artistic issues surrounding the theory of aniconism and, at the same time, fails to offer a new, comprehensive explanation of what is seen—or not seen—in the art.

My chief concern regarding Dehejia's application of the theory of multivalency is that she does not distinguish deliberately intended multiple meanings from those that are naturally inherent in certain subjects. If my reading of Dehejia's article is correct, she is suggesting that the creators of monuments, such as the *stūpas* at Sāñcī, Bhārhut, and other early Buddhist sites, deliberately tried to invest the sculptural compositions with multiple layers of meaning. I contend that the compositions are intended to show a single, principal meaning but sometimes intrinsically carry with them additional layers of meaning as well.

To use a literary analogy, it is easily observed that a given word might have a variety of meanings. A writer can employ a word that has multiple meanings to convey only one meaning, as in most scientific writing, or can use the word to suggest more than one meaning, as in punning, off-color jokes, poetry, and a variety of other literary forms. The specific characteristics of some languages

have enabled writers to master the art of *double entendre* and create highly sophisticated literary forms. Sanskrit authors, inspired by the peculiarities of the Sanskrit language that facilitated the creation of simultaneous meanings, developed the literary mode of *śleṣa*, a deliberate literary mode that was predicated on the singular characteristics of the Sanskrit language. Specifically, the rules of Sanskrit grammar require the coalescence of certain sound combinations, with the result that Sanskrit passages are often written continuously, without spaces between words. To give an example in English of how this can be done, one might use the sequence of letters *a-t-o-n-e*. Depending upon how one breaks up the sequence, one can read the letters as “a tone,” “at one,” or “atone.” Thus, it is easy to see how writers could take advantage of the language to imbue their works with multiple, simultaneous meanings.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, punning could be accomplished simply by choosing words that have alternative meanings.<sup>12</sup> The word *hide* can mean “the skin of an animal,” “to put out of view,” “to give a beating to,” and is also an old English unit of land area.<sup>13</sup>

It is important to establish, however, that the potential of a word (or, in Sanskrit, a sequence of letters) to convey more than one meaning does not prove that an author who uses that word intends that more than one of them apply to a particular situation. The word *spring* can be used by a weather forecaster to refer to the season following winter and by a mattress sales clerk to refer to the support under a mattress, but to conclude that by using the word *spring* each individual is referring to the variant meanings is simply incorrect.

What I believe Dehejia is suggesting about what she calls *emblems* (such as trees, pillars, and *stūpas* in the art of Sāñcī, Bhārhut, and other sites) is that inherently they may have more than one meaning and that these meanings are manifest in early Buddhist art in two ways. These two ways constitute what she calls her “two prerequisites.” First, she suggests that individual “emblems” are imbued with multiple meanings and function in different contexts with different meanings (45, para. 2 and 3), but she uses neither internal evidence in the reliefs nor external evidence from Buddhological or other sources to verify that the same motif might be intended to convey alternative meanings. Second, she suggests that in a single composition, an “emblem”



might communicate more than one layer of meaning (45, para. 4).<sup>14</sup> This assumes that the individual responsible for the selection of the subject matter in an artistic composition deliberately intended to communicate simultaneous, multiple meanings and apparently intended that the alternative meanings be given equal or relatively equal emphasis.<sup>15</sup> However, my research suggests that while additional layers of meanings might be implicit for some subjects, the compositions of the early Buddhist artistic repertoire were intended to focus on a principal meaning. I contend that while a representation of lay worshipers performing devotions at the site of the Buddha's first sermon is undoubtedly a reminder of the first sermon itself and a reference to it, the actual subject of the scene is still the worship at the site. In other words, I distinguish among a *representation*, a *reminder*, and a *reference*, while Dehejia seems to conflate these discrete notions.

To give an example from Western culture, a representation of a Christmas tree on a Christmas card is not a representation of the birth of Christ, which is the main event celebrated by Christmas, although it may implicitly refer to it and be a reminder of it. But it also might not implicitly refer to the birth of Christ either: some people—for example, the many American Jews who install Christmas trees in their homes and businesses and send Christmas greeting cards—do not intend that the tree refer to the birth of Christ. Indeed, such individuals commonly shrink from the notion of associating their Christmas greetings with the event of Christ's birth but instead intend to communicate to their family, friends, and associates simply a celebration of the season and good will.

Thus, a multivalency theory should not presume that the same motif (or "emblem") conveys the same meanings throughout its history and in all of its usages. New layers of meanings may have been added over the course of centuries; some may have pertained to certain populations only or may have been used only in certain regions, and others may have been employed in otherwise defined contexts. Without specific study one cannot assume that a motif with potentially multiple layers of meanings had all of those meanings at every period and in every instance of its usage. The task is to study the specific situation to determine which meanings might have been present and which were incorporated into the work by the artists. When I have applied the concept of

multivalency to art, I have looked for specific proof that in a given case the artistic intention was to present a duality or a multiplicity of meanings simultaneously.<sup>16</sup> My suggestion that the Māravijaya image in Pāla art might have served as a dual image referring to the Pāla kings is supported by inscriptional evidence that indicates a widespread convention establishing a metaphoric relationship between the Pāla kings and the image type.<sup>17</sup> Further, I believe that there is generally, if not always, a principal meaning and that the other meanings are additional. Thus, in my discussion of the popularly portrayed Māravijaya as a dual image referring also to the Pāla kings in Pāla art, I have no intention of suggesting that the reference to the Pāla kings is the principal or even an equivalent subject of the art but rather an additional layer of meaning that has been grafted onto the basic Buddhist image. Nor do I intend to suggest that the same subject, the Māravijaya, appearing in the art of other regions—even those heavily dependent upon the Pāla tradition, such as Tibet—was intended to communicate the allusion to the Pāla kings.

Dehejia's interpretation of multiple meanings has led her to apply the principle of multivalency broadly, without proving that the principle is applicable to the cases she cites. Her interpretation fails to discriminate between primary and additional layers of meaning and to distinguish among representations, references, and reminders. Furthermore, in her discussion of emblems, she does not explain the sources for the various interpretations she provides for them, nor does she supply the reader with a means of interpreting a motif in a given context. I shall discuss these ideas in more detail below.

#### "EMBLEMS"

A key term for Dehejia—used both in the title of her article and throughout her presentation—is *emblem*.<sup>18</sup> The concept of the emblem is the foundation stone of Dehejia's theory of multivalency. However, I believe that the most fundamental flaw in the multivalency theory is the assumption that certain motifs or subjects in the early Buddhist art of India necessarily function as emblems.

Dehejia defines an emblem as "a picture that represents something different from itself" (45). By using the term *emblem*, she assumes that what she calls "the major Buddhist emblems" of the tree, the pillar, and the *stūpa* (and, I assume,

some of the other subjects she addresses in her article) invariably represent something other than themselves. For traditional aniconists, this other subject is believed to constitute the “real” subject of the scene, namely, an anthropomorphic depiction of the Buddha that is absent from the composition. Dehejia modifies the traditional aniconic view and suggests that “emblems” might also refer to “sacred sites” and “attributes” of the Buddhist faith. As with proponents of the aniconic theory before her, Dehejia’s list of emblems includes only nonfigurative motifs, although, theoretically, there is no reason that a human figure or an animal cannot also serve as an emblem since the only requirement of “emblemness” is that something stand for something other than itself.<sup>19</sup>

Dehejia’s discussion of emblems is unclear because of the ambiguity with which the relevant emblems are named. Her generalization about multiple meanings is specifically applied to the tree, the pillar, and the *stūpa*, which she terms “the major Buddhist emblems” (45). However, it is not explained whether this triad is named to exemplify a variety of emblems or to stand as “the three major” emblems in early Buddhist art. If the former, this is not specified; if the latter, evidence to verify that the tree, pillar, and *stūpa* are the major emblems is not provided. Therefore, the basis upon which the tree, the pillar, and the *stūpa* are prioritized over other Buddhist subjects, such as the *cakra*, the footprints, and the throne, is unclear. No literary, inscriptional, or other proof of this prioritization is provided, and it is unlikely that Buddhists and scholars of Buddhism would all agree that these three would be paramount among the possibilities in the Buddhist repertoire. Furthermore, Dehejia does not specify which tree she considers to be one of the three major emblems, nor does this issue become clear in her subsequent discussions: sometimes “the tree” clearly refers to the *bodhi* tree, but in other contexts Dehejia broadens the category to include other sacred trees in Buddhism.<sup>20</sup>

Regardless, I do not understand why nonfigurative elements in the compositions, like trees, pillars, and *stūpas*, might not simply represent themselves. If I were to go to Bodh Gayā today, I would find there a *bodhi* tree and a temple. These were not installed at the site as substitutes for images of the Buddha but are important Buddhisto-logical motifs in their own right. If I were to take a picture of the *bodhi* tree at Bodh Gayā and show

it to my friends and relatives at home, I would not say that this is a photograph of a tree that represents the Buddha but that this is a photograph of the tree (or the descendant of the tree) under which the Buddha attained enlightenment. Therefore, this particular tree is a reminder of the event in the Buddha’s life and a reference to it, but it is not a substitute for the event, nor is it a representation of the Buddha. If anything, it is a participant in the event that still remains at the site. Specifically, the tree marks the location of the Buddha’s “sitting place” (*pīṭha*) but does not emblematically depict the Buddha himself. Nor, I argue, is it merely an indicator of the site or simply an “attribute of the faith.”<sup>21</sup> While it may suggest all of these things, the tree embodies its own meanings as well. Further, as I hope to demonstrate in this article, I suggest that it is incorrect to look at a scene that might contain numerous figures and activities along with a motif like a tree or a throne and define the subject matter of the composition according to that motif alone.

Dehejia’s own illustrations and analysis include a number of examples that illustrate my viewpoint. One relief depicts the story of the serpent king Erapattra (fig. 1).<sup>22</sup> Dehejia claims that the seat and the garlanded tree at the lower left indicate the emblematic presence of the Buddha, before whom the serpent king kneels in obeisance



FIG. 1 (Dehejia fig. 3). Story of the Serpent King Erapattra. From Bhārhut, Madhya Pradesh, India. Ca. 100–80 B.C.E. Indian Museum, Calcutta. Photo: Archaeological Survey of India.





FIG. 2 (Dehejia fig. 2). Pageantry Scene? On east gateway of Stūpa I at Sāñcī, Madhya Pradesh, India. Ca. second–third decade of first century C.E. Photo: Archaeological Survey of India.

(48). She cites an inscription accompanying the scene, which she transliterates as “*Erapato Nāgarāja Bhagavato Vadate*” and translates as “Serpent King Erapata adores the Holy One” (48), as evidence. However, the inscription does not prove that “the Holy One”—that is, the Buddha—is represented emblematically by the seat and the tree but only that Erapattra is honoring him. The key term in the inscription is *vadate*, from the root *vand*, which has a variety of meanings, including to praise, celebrate, laud, extol, show honor to, do homage to, salute respectfully or deferentially, venerate, worship, adore, to offer anything, and to show honor to anyone.<sup>23</sup> The physical presence of the Buddha is not implicitly required in most, if not all, of these meanings. In other words, the Buddha can be praised, celebrated, lauded, extolled, have honor shown to him, have homage paid to him, be venerated, worshiped, adored, have offerings made to him, and be shown honor without being physically present.

Based on the literary account I have found that most closely corresponds with the Bhārhut composition, I suggest that the seat and the tree simply indicate the Buddha’s “sitting place” and are not emblematic of the Buddha.<sup>24</sup> While I cannot yet explain why the Buddha is absent from the scene,<sup>25</sup> I believe that his absence is simply that—an absence—rather than a presence indicated by the seat or the tree. If I am correct, then the seat and the tree are not emblems, and the symbolic/emblematic premise of the multivalency theory, and the aniconic theory as it has been traditionally understood and applied, cannot be supported.

Although other examples illustrated by Dehejia can be used to demonstrate the idea of the

absent Buddha rather than the Buddha indicated by emblems, a scene on one of the gateways at Sāñcī is especially pertinent (fig. 2). Dehejia and others before her have identified this composition as the Great Departure of the Buddha-[to-be], but this may not be the case. In her discussion of this scene, Dehejia questions how what she calls my “pageantry” theory can justify the fact that no Buddha (or, more correctly, Bodhisattva) is seated upon the horse. While the explanation for this scene that I propose provides an answer to this intriguing and important question, as I shall explain below, I am puzzled as to which emblem is intended to depict the absent Buddha-to-be in this composition. Simply, the horse does not represent the absent figure, nor does the umbrella, which even in so-called iconic depictions of the Buddha is held above his head. In other words, it is difficult to defend the belief that the Buddha-to-be is indicated here through emblematic means. If the scene depicts the Great Departure, the Buddha-to-be can only be indicated by his absence and not as the equivalent of a nonfigurative symbol. Therefore, the art shows not the “presence” of the Buddha-to-be but his absence.<sup>26</sup>

I suggest that unless there is specific internal evidence in an artistic composition to demonstrate that nonfigurative motifs are intended to serve as surrogates for something else, we should be cautious and not make this assumption. Alternatively or additionally, there must be external evidence to demonstrate that early Buddhist art employed such emblems if we are to use this mode of interpretation. However, Dehejia does not explain how she knows the meaning of any of the “emblems” she discusses.

DEHEJIA'S "THREE VALID CATEGORIES" (OR "THREE VALID ASPECTS") OF EMBLEMS

Dehejia explains that the "interpretation of the emblem, with its inherent fluidity of meanings, will be considered under its three valid categories—first as an aniconic presentation of the Buddha, next as a sacred site, and finally as an attribute [of the faith]" (48).<sup>27</sup> Except for her brief conclusion (64), the preponderance of her article is devoted to discussion of the emblem under these three aspects (48–64). Although Dehejia claims that these are "three valid categories," it is unclear how their validity is established, nor does the discussion of the works of art reinforce the claim of their validity. Further, it is not apparent from Dehejia's presentation whether these three categories are intended to explain all possible subjects in early Buddhist art or whether there are others as well. If these three categories are intended to cover all contingencies, then I disagree. Even examples cited in Dehejia's own article demonstrate that this is not the case. I would argue, for example, that the two Aśokan scenes discussed below are not merely "site" scenes, though the events take place at Buddhist sacred sites. Instead, they might be better classified as historical or quasihistorical narratives intended to convey a number of messages to the Buddhist devotee, including, among other things, reverence to the Buddha and his relics by living beings other than humans in one relief and a model of benevolent *cakravartin*-ship in the person of Aśoka in the other. Most importantly regarding these three categories, although Dehejia states that the "exact interpretation of the emblems depends on their visual context" (45), this statement is never clarified, nor is the reader provided with a means of determining the interpretation of motifs in individual cases.

**The Emblem as Aniconic Presence.** Under the first "valid category," Dehejia claims that emblems may denote the aniconic presence of the Buddha. She cites a dictionary meaning of the term *aniconic* as "symbolizing without aiming at resemblance" and *aniconism* as "worship or veneration of an object that represents a god without being an image of him" (45). In an endnote to these definitions, she provides additional meanings from other sources. She notes that *The Random House Dictionary* explains aniconism as "opposition to the use of idols" (65 n. 5). Although Dehejia has understandably selected a definition

that reinforces her interpretation and application of the term *aniconic*, alternative meanings cannot be ignored when examining the ways in which aniconism has been viewed in scholarship. Since the traditional aniconic theory has been intimately linked with the idea of a presumed Hīnayāna prohibition, an historical overview of the theory of aniconism and its abiding interpretation in scholarship also must accommodate the definition that cites opposition to the use of idols. Further, the definition of aniconism that Dehejia uses—worship or veneration of an object that represents a god without being an image of him—is problematic for today's scholars of Buddhism. At the time the aniconic theory was first proposed, Western scholars assumed that the Buddha was a god, a factor that may have influenced the choice of the term *aniconism* to describe what they perceived in Indic art. But, as Helmuth von Glasenapp has since demonstrated, the Buddha was not a god.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, while Dehejia's choice of a definition for the term *aniconic* selects an element of aniconism—the use of emblems—that serves the purpose of the theory of multivalence she is proposing, other components of the aniconic and aniconism should not be ignored in a thorough study of the issues.

The section of Dehejia's article called "The Aniconic Presence" is predicated on the idea that early Buddhist artistic compositions contain "emblems" that stand for what should be anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha (48). However, in the case of the Erapattrā relief from Bhārhut discussed above, I suggested that the Buddha may be indicated by his absence, not through the use of emblems. A similar case can be made for a relief from Bhārhut that shows King Ajātaśatru, who is identified in the accompanying inscription, kneeling in a reverential pose before a seat that has a pair of footprints before it and a parasol above (fig. 3). Dehejia states unequivocally: "To ensure that the viewer correctly identifies the footprints, throne, and parasol as the Buddha, the artist added the label 'Ajātasatu Bhagavato vandate,' or 'Ajātasatru bows to the Blessed One' . . . It is difficult to misconstrue the artist's intention" (50).<sup>29</sup> However, I suggest that the footprints, seat, and umbrella signify the Buddha's "sitting place" and are not emblems substituting for his physical person. If this scene represents King Ajātaśatru's visit to the Buddha himself, then I propose that the Buddha's presence is indicated by his absence. The throne, with its respectful parasol above, would mark





FIG. 3 (Dehejia fig. 4). Veneration by King Ajātaśatru.  
From Bhārhut, Madhya Pradesh, India.  
Ca. 100–80 B.C.E. Indian Museum, Calcutta.  
Photo: Archaeological Survey of India.

the Buddha's sitting place, and the footprints below would represent the place for the Buddha's feet. The inscription, which Dehejia believes so unambiguously proves that the footprints, throne, and parasol represent the Buddha can be as easily interpreted to mean that Ajātaśatru bows to honor a being who is not shown.

An alternative interpretation may also be offered regarding this scene. Since Ajātaśatru was converted by the Buddha only a year before the Buddha died, much of the king's devotions to the Buddha took place in the years following the Buddha's death, when the Buddha was no longer present. This scene might show the king venerating a place where the Buddha once sat but after the Buddha was already dead and therefore not to be expected in the composition. In this case as well, the footprints, throne, and parasol would be part of the paraphernalia installed at the place of veneration rather than symbols indicating the Buddha's person.

Another example Dehejia uses to illustrate the Buddha's aniconic presence is what she calls the "Enlightenment face of the Prasenajit Pillar"

from Bhārhut (fig. 4). Dehejia refers to the uppermost of the three panels on this pillar as exemplary of her second prerequisite (in which the "emblem" conveys multiple meanings). She claims that "the prime intention of this panel was to depict the historical event [of the Buddha's enlightenment]" (45) and states unequivocally that the "throne, which is surmounted by *triratna* emblems and stands beneath the *bodhi* tree encircled by a hypaethral shrine, represents, in this instance, the presence of the enlightened Buddha" (50). Yet she is apparently also persuaded by the arguments I have proposed suggesting that this scene represents worship at the site of Bodhi Gayā at a time after the enlightenment of the Buddha, for she offers a "site" interpretation of the scene as well.<sup>30</sup> However, whereas I believe that the worship at the site is the principal theme of the relief, she claims that it is primarily a depiction of the event of the Buddha's enlightenment. A key difference between our interpretations centers on the translation of the inscription, "*Bhagavato sakamunino bodho*," which she interprets as "enlightenment of the Holy One Śākyamuni" (50). I believe, however, that the term *bodho* may denote the tree and not the event of the enlightenment.<sup>31</sup> Based on an examination of the narrative elements in the composition and this inscription, I suggest that the scene shows devotees (at a time subsequent to the Buddha's enlightenment) indicating their reverence to the sacred place of the event and the sacred tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment. While Dehejia claims that the Buddha is indicated emblematically by the tree, I propose that the throne marks the location where the Buddha sat beneath the tree and that the tree represents itself.

To explain the depiction of the building, which, as far as is known from archaeological and textual sources, was not present at the time of the Buddha's enlightenment, Dehejia suggests that the artists who created this panel may have been unaware that a portrayal of a building erected after the time of the event might be anachronistic in a representation of the event itself. She cites what she considers to be a parallel example from the sixteenth century, but a theoretical analogy does not offer proof for the Bhārhut case. Further, the major basis for the interpretation of the scene as a depiction of the sacred site is the presence of the building. Then to argue that the building is there because the composition is a

depiction of a site seems to be circular reasoning. I suggest that a post-enlightenment structure is depicted because a post-enlightenment scene is intended.

The central and lower panels on the same face of this pillar show two other compositions normally associated with the Buddha's enlightenment. The central panel shows four groups of gods, separated, as Dehejia says, by the "compositional device of a tree" (51). The criteria for determining that the tree is not an emblem in this case are not specified. Inscriptions accompanying the scene name the groups of gods as beings from northern, eastern, and southern quarters, with those from the western quarter presumably also included, although an inscription for this group is lacking (50–51).<sup>32</sup> Dehejia states that these beings came to honor the enlightened Buddha (51 and 66 n. 22),<sup>33</sup> although at least one textual source records that they came prior to the enlightenment in order to help weaken Māra.<sup>34</sup> The figure at the lower left of the composition is Māra, sitting beneath a tree and writing in the ground.<sup>35</sup> Whether the gods are there to help defeat Māra or to honor the newly enlightened Buddha,<sup>36</sup> I propose that the composition does not require the presence of a Buddha image. Instead, I suggest that the scene is not the Buddha's enlightenment but rather just what it appears to be and just what its inscriptions suggest: it is the representation of the role played by the celestial beings in this momentous event. If a camera had been present at the time of the Buddha's enlightenment, this scene might show what the camera would have found if it had turned to pan the audience. I suggest that these beings are immortalized in the artistic composition for their role as supporters and devotees of the Buddha. The emphasis on these figures correlates with textual sources, such as the *Lalitavistara*, which contains a lengthy and detailed description of the role of the *devas*, although it might be overlooked by those concerned primarily with what was happening to the Buddha.<sup>37</sup>

The lower panel on this pillar shows female musicians and dancers, who, according to Dehejia, arrive at the site of the enlightenment to honor the Buddha (51).<sup>38</sup> As she notes, four of the inscriptions accompanying this scene identify four of the figures as specifically named *apsaras*. She claims that a fifth inscription reads: "music of the gods enlivened by mimic dance" (51).<sup>39</sup> There are no motifs in the scene that can



FIG. 4 (Dehejia fig. 5). "Enlightenment Face" of "Prasenajit Pillar." From Bhārhut, Madhya Pradesh, India. Ca. 100–80 B.C.E. Indian Museum, Calcutta.





FIG. 5 (Dehejia fig. 9). Buddha's Descent from Trāyastriṃśa Heaven at Sāṅkāśya? Ca. first century B.C.E. From Butkara I, Swāt, Pakistan. Saidu Sharif Museum. Photo: Martha Carter.



FIG. 6. Devotion at Sāṅkāśya. From Bhārhut, Madhya Pradesh, India. Ca. 100–80 B.C.E. Indian Museum, Calcutta. Photo: John C. Huntington.

be construed as emblems, and I propose that the subject matter be interpreted literally, based on the internal information contained in the inscriptions and visual composition. These tell us only that the *apsaras* are dancing and performing music. To use the camera analogy again, it is as if the camera had now panned to the orchestra and performers. And, while the occasion for dancing and singing may have been the remarkable transformation from Bodhisattva to Buddha that Śākyamuni was undergoing, I suggest that the figures are shown as important devotees in their own right, like the *devas* in the scene above it.

Taken together, what do the three panels on this face of the so-called Prasenajit pillar communicate? Dehejia discusses these scenes as part of her "Aniconic Presence" theme and summarizes her interpretation in this way: "The three panels on this face of the Prasenajit panel [*sic* for pillar] thus represent simultaneous events; they pertain to the enlightenment of the Buddha, as proclaimed by the inscription in the topmost panel, in which the Buddha's presence is indicated by aniconic emblems. Read thus, the presence of the gods of the four directions and of the heavenly *apsarās* becomes meaningful" (51). (The reader is left to infer how the presence of the gods and the heavenly *apsaras* become meaningful.)

However, I propose that the upper scene shows two pairs of devotees offering their veneration at the place where the Buddha sat, meditated, defeated Māra, and became enlightened and that this devotion takes place after the time of the Buddha's enlightenment. The two lower panels are also devotional scenes, but, in these, celestial beings offer their celebrations to the Buddha. Together, these reliefs reinforce the theme of devotion to the Buddha by his followers that I suggest is an important message of early Buddhist art. While the central event being celebrated is the most momentous event of the Buddha's life and one of the most important subjects in Buddhism—Śākyamuni's enlightenment—it is the celebrators, not the Buddha, who constitute the subject of these particular works of art.

Dehejia identifies a small relief found in recent excavations in the Swāt region of Pakistan as an aniconic representation of the Buddha's descent from Trāyastriṃśa Heaven at Sāṅkāśya (fig. 5). Extrapolating from my interpretation of a relief from Bhārhut, which traditionally has been identified as the Buddha's Descent at Sāṅkāśya (fig. 6) but which I believe depicts a worship scene at

Sāṅkāśya,<sup>40</sup> Dehejia assumes that I would apply the same interpretation to this Swāt relief. She says that “Those who deny the existence of aniconism<sup>41</sup> would see the ladders as the actual set of stairs set up at the pilgrimage site of Sāṅkissa” (53).<sup>42</sup> However, while both the Bhārhut and Swāt compositions apparently refer to the Buddha’s descent at Sāṅkāśya, they may represent completely different themes. The one from Swāt might show the event (with the Buddha missing),<sup>43</sup> but the other, from Bhārhut, does not. In the Bhārhut carving, rows of devotees circumambulate the ladders and hold their hands in *añjali mudrā* as an expression of their devotion, and I contend for the reasons presented in my article that that scene represents the holy site of Sāṅkāśya, with devotees honoring the site.<sup>44</sup> If this is true, the two reliefs would convey completely different messages, one of which might relate to the Buddha life event, the other to the commemoration and celebration of that event and the place where it occurred.

As Dehejia observes, Indra and Brahmā are depicted in the Swāt relief, but the two Vedic gods are absent from the Bhārhut composition. Because the aniconic theory has never been extended to include beings other than the Buddha, Dehejia recognized the need to provide an explanation for the absence of these two figures, who are crucial to the narrative of the Buddha’s descent. She proposes that the absence of the Vedic gods, which she terms an avoidance, is “to be seen in the context of Hindu worship which, in the Vedic period, was concerned only with sacrifice and in which images of the gods played no part” (66 n. 27). She goes on: “Few early images of Hindu deities exist. It was mainly with the spread of Purāṇic Hinduism that images of the Hindu gods proliferated” (66 n. 27). But Dehejia creates a very serious problem for her argument with this explanation. First, she associates the art of Bhārhut with the Vedic period, which concluded more than half a millennium before the Bhārhut *stūpa* carvings were created. Second, she implies that Vedic practices regarding the use of images, whether she is correct in her claims or not, had some bearing on a Buddhist monument. Since Buddhism reflects a thoroughly non-Vedic religious system—many might even say an anti-Vedic system—it is doubtful that the Vedic situation is pertinent here. While it is true that Indra and Brahmā are Vedic gods, their appearance, or lack of appearance, in Buddhist art cannot be

expected to be governed by the rules of Vedism. Their subservient role in Buddhism—primarily as attendants to the Buddha—makes it clear that their status has been transformed from that which they enjoyed in Vedism. Further, Dehejia’s argument that it was only with the spread of Purāṇic Hinduism that images of the Hindu gods proliferated seems to be almost a Hindu equivalent of the Buddhist aniconic theory—in the Buddhist case, the earlier aniconic tradition of the Hīnayānists was supposed to have been supplanted by the later Mahāyāna image tradition; in the Hindu case, she implies that the earlier Vedic lack of imagery was replaced by the imagery of the Purāṇic Hindu tradition. Since there is a decided lack of early imagery for both Buddhism and Hinduism (and in Jainism as well) even when the religions already flourished, I propose that there might be other reasons for the apparent lack of early images.<sup>45</sup>

My interpretation of the Bhārhut panel offers a far more plausible explanation for the absence of Indra and Brahmā in the composition. If the scene shows worship at the site of Sāṅkāśya after the time of the Buddha life event, then it is unnecessary to include a depiction of the Buddha (who was no longer there), and there is no need to include the figures of the two Vedic gods who accompanied him on his descent. It is only when the composition is viewed as a representation of the event itself that the absence of Indra and Brahmā becomes problematic.<sup>46</sup>

Dehejia then queries why a relief from Mathurā (fig. 7) that has the Buddha along with Indra and Brahmā is “unhesitatingly accepted as a life scene . . . [when] Xuanxang’s [*sic* for Xuanzang’s] account of the site of Sāṅkissa speaks of an image atop the steps. Why is it suddenly assumed that ‘depictions of events of the life of the Buddha . . . became commonplace’ at the precise stage when the iconic replaces the aniconic?” (53).<sup>47</sup> A careful look at the Mathurā relief reveals that the Buddha is present in each of the life scenes depicted on this panel. The context of the descent vignette among a set of five Buddha life scenes, all shown with Buddhas, in a single composition offers compelling evidence that the episode represents a Buddha life event. I suggest that Dehejia is looking indiscriminately at a number of compositions that have been traditionally identified as representing one subject (in this case, the Buddha’s descent), and, by ignoring the many distinctions among these





FIG. 7. Buddha Life Scenes. From Rājghāt, Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh, India.  
Ca. second century C.E. Mathurā Museum, Mathurā. Photo: John C. Huntington.



FIG. 8 (Dehejia fig. 10). Buddha's First Sermon. From Bactro-Gandhāra region.  
Ca. second–third century C.E. Present whereabouts unknown. Photo: Archaeological Survey of India.



reliefs, has erroneously concluded that they represent the same subject.

The defense of aniconism is stretched in Dehejia's discussion of two reliefs from the Bactro-Gandhāra region (figs. 8 and 9). Figure 8 is a depiction of the Buddha's first sermon in which a seated Buddha reaches out a hand as if to turn a wheel. Dehejia claims that such a representation, aside from indicating the action of the Buddha turning the wheel of the law as he is said to have done with his first sermon, "may also be understood as the anthropomorphic Buddha giving his sanction to the earlier homage paid to the wheel-topped pillar" (55).<sup>48</sup> She reasserts this claim for figure 9, showing a standing Buddha touching or pointing to a pillar topped by three wheels, and concludes by saying that "Those who believe in the primacy of emblems may suggest that the anthropomorphic figure derives its validity from the earlier established emblem!" (55). But Dehejia provides no evidence to support the assertion that the Buddha is "giving his sanction to the earlier homage paid to the wheel-topped pillar" in figure 9. For figure 8, what is the rationale for saying that the actual Buddha performing his sermon is gaining validity from the emblem? Is Dehejia suggesting that he is gaining validity from the emblem that symbolizes his first sermon but only became an emblem symbolizing his first sermon after the first sermon itself? What is the evidence that justifies these proposals in

terms of Buddhist practice, literature, or other sources? From what evidence are these ideas drawn, and how are they supported?

I suggest that figure 9 depicts a Buddha pointing to a wheel-topped pillar that has been erected, perhaps to honor the place where a sermon had been given.<sup>49</sup> He is accompanied by monk devotees at the left and Vajrapāṇi at the right, while flying celestials hover above. Figure 8 probably shows a literal rendering of the Buddha's turning of the wheel of law. The claim that the Buddha is here gaining his validity from the emblem is unsubstantiated and, as far as I can determine, does not make sense either Buddhologically or in relation to the artistic developments of the period.

As an aside, Dehejia identifies the configuration in figure 9 as a *triratna*. While this configuration shares a visual resemblance to the *triratna* form that she illustrates (compare with fig. 17, Dehejia's fig. 22), the *triratna* component is absent in this composition, and I suggest that the configuration depicts a pillar topped by a capital that has a design incorporating three wheels. The assertion (55) that the form refers to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha (the traditional interpretation of the *triratna*) is therefore untenable. Because three wheels are shown rather than the *triratna*, it is more plausible that they are intended to suggest three teachings, or three levels of teachings, or something else pertaining to the number three and potentially conveyed by the wheel.

Further developing the theme of the "Aniconic Presence," Dehejia claims that while the artists of the Bhārhut and Sāñcī monuments portrayed simple, and often single, emblems, the Amarāvātī artists used a series of emblems combined to build up an "emblematic body" (55)<sup>50</sup> for the Buddha. She illustrates a composition that shows a crowd of figures surrounding a central throne with a number of accoutrements (fig. 10). But upon what basis is the extraordinary suggestion made in the interpretation of the subject of this composition that the Buddha's feet are represented by the footprints (this is the most plausible of the equations); that his limbs are represented by the cushioned throne (how is it determined that it was not his buttocks that was represented by the throne?); that his torso is represented by the pillar [of radiance]; and that his head is equivalent to the *triratna* above? What is the foundation for this interpretation? Where is



FIG. 9 (Dehejia fig. 11). Buddha Touching or Pointing to a Wheel-topped Pillar. From Bactro-Gandhāra region. Ca. second-third century C.E. Private Collection, Japan. Photo: Martha Carter.





FIG. 10 (Dehejia fig. 12). Buddhist Devotional Scene. From Amarāvati, Andhra Pradesh, India. Ca. second century C.E. Amarāvati Site Museum. Photo: Amarāvati Site Museum.

the Buddhological or other evidence of these equivalents? Why is this not another example, like those discussed above, of the Buddha's throne and its accoutrements being shown not as emblems of the physical person of the Buddha but rather as part of the setting of the scene?

**The Emblems of the Tree, the Pillar, and the Stūpa as a Sacred Site.** The second of the "valid categories" concerns the depiction of sacred spots and the devotions performed at them (56–61).<sup>51</sup> Dehejia says that in "their second aspect, the emblems of the tree, pillar, and *stūpa*, seen in relief sculptures, may represent sacred spots, or *tīrthas*,<sup>52</sup>

and the devotions performed there. Thus, the *bodhi* tree may be intended to represent Bodh Gayā, site of the enlightenment; the wheel-crowned pillar may represent Sārnāth, site of the first sermon; and the *stūpa* may represent one of the sacred relic mounds built at a variety of sites" (45).<sup>53</sup>

Dehejia discusses two reliefs at Sāncī that depict the Emperor Aśoka's visits at Buddhist sacred sites (figs. 11 and 12).<sup>54</sup> The first composition shows a visit by Emperor Aśoka and his entourage to the *bodhi* tree at Bodh Gayā; the second scene shows his visit to the Rāmagrāma *stūpa*. Although Dehejia does not specifically state this, the premise of her article and the subheading for this section of her text imply that she would interpret the *bodhi* tree and/or the building in the center of the Bodh Gayā scene and the *stūpa* in the Rāmagrāma scene as emblems standing for something else, presumably the sites of Bodh Gayā and Rāmagrāma, respectively. However, I suggest that these subjects do not serve emblematic roles in these scenes: they are major "actors" in the narratives and, therefore, represent themselves and not something else.

With respect to the Bodh Gayā depiction, the *Aśokāvadāna* makes it clear that Aśoka was visiting the tree when he went to Bodh Gayā and not a Buddha in the form of a tree or as symbolized by a tree—and I see no justification for reading additional layers of meaning into the tree in the *Aśokāvadāna* or in an artistic composition such as this.<sup>55</sup> The only other possible motif that might serve as a nonfigurative emblem in this composition is the building and its altar. But if Dehejia would claim that the building with its altar serves



FIG. 11 (Dehejia fig. 14). Emperor Aśoka's Visit to the *Bodhi* Tree at Bodh Gayā during the Quinquennial Festival. On east gateway of Stūpa I at Sāncī, Madhya Pradesh, India. Ca. second–third decade of first century C.E. Photo: Archaeological Survey of India.



as an emblem for the site, then I disagree. I suggest that it is included because it was present at the site at the time of Aśoka's visit and was an important element in the Aśokan theme. Dehejia claims that the building was not present at the time of this visit by Aśoka, citing a passage (57) in the *Aśokāvadāna* where Aśoka is said to have "mounted a platform that he had had built on all four sides of the Bodhi tree."<sup>56</sup> She interprets this statement about the platform to mean that there was no shrine present at the time Aśoka lustrated the tree. However, the mention of a platform at the base of the tree does not preclude the simultaneous existence of a building. In fact, the sequence of events recorded in the *Aśokāvadāna* reveals that on an earlier visit (his first visit) to Bodhi Gayā, Aśoka had built a "*caitya*" there.<sup>57</sup> Since the term *caitya* can refer to a building associated with a sacred relic, such as a *bodhi* tree, it is possible—even likely—that the building shown in the relief is a *caitya* and, specifically, the very one built by Aśoka.<sup>58</sup>

Dehejia identifies the event depicted in the Sāñcī relief as Aśoka bathing the *bodhi* tree due to his desire to revive the tree after it had been cursed by Aśoka's chief queen, Tīṣyarakṣitā. She does not cite the source for the version of the story she uses to explain the scene, but her citation about the platform from which the *bodhi* tree could be watered occurs on page 266 of Strong's translation of the *Aśokāvadāna*. On the preceding page, the section heading clarifies that the event she notes was part of the Quinquennial Festival, during which Aśoka presented the Buddhist community with all of his property except his state treasury and promised to bathe the *bodhi* tree with milk, which he then did. Dehejia has, therefore, somehow confused the Quinquennial Festival with the Tīṣyarakṣitā story.<sup>59</sup>

Dehejia may have been following Foucher, who cites the version of the Tīṣyarakṣitā story in the

*Divyāvadāna*, which relates that the tree was revived by Aśoka after his wife tried to kill it.<sup>60</sup> But if she is relying on the *Divyāvadāna* for one portion of her interpretation—that is, for the story—how can the *Aśokāvadāna*—and a different story—be used to decide whether a building should or should not be present in the composition? Regardless, it is clear that the tree and the building are important elements in the story rather than emblems. Indeed, the centrality of the tree and structure indicate their preeminence as foci of devotion in their own right and not as emblems.

The second Aśokan composition referred to by Dehejia (57) depicts Aśoka's visit to Rāmagrāma *stūpa* (fig. 12).<sup>61</sup> After the Buddha's cremation, his relics were divided into eight portions, and one portion was given to each of the eight kings of the time. Each portion was considered to be a *droṇa* (literally, a bucket[ful]). Each king then built a *stūpa* over these relics. These *stūpas* were called *droṇa stūpas* (because of the *droṇa* measurement and also because a brahman named Droṇa had performed the division of the relics). Additional *stūpas* were erected over the bucket that had been used for measuring the relics and over the embers of the cremation fire. At some point, the *droṇa stūpa* that had been built at Rāmagrāma was supposedly flooded by the Ganges River, and the relics were swept down to the underwater palace of a *nāga* king. There, the *nāgas* not only worshiped the relics but did so in such a grand fashion that when Aśoka came to Rāmagrāma to retrieve this portion of the relics, he was convinced to allow the *nāgas* to retain possession of them.<sup>62</sup> The composition at Sāñcī shows a *stūpa* in the center, with a group of *nāgas* on the left appearing in devotional poses. To the right of the *stūpa*, a human king, presumably Aśoka, arrives in his horse-drawn chariot with his entourage, apparently with the aim of retrieving the relics.



FIG. 12. Emperor Aśoka's Visit to the Rāmagrāma *Stūpa*. On south gateway of *Stūpa* I at Sāñcī, Madhya Pradesh, India. Ca. second-third decade of first century C.E. Photo: John C. Huntington.



Like Aśoka's visit to Bodh Gayā for the Quinquennial Festival, this composition seems a straightforward illustration of a story that is recorded in literature in a forthright fashion and is not characterized by multiple meanings.<sup>63</sup> I submit that the *stūpa* is intended as a representation of the actual structure that had been erected to house the Buddha's relic, rather than as an emblem, and therefore serves as part of the narrative. Simply, the scene does not include an emblem, and it is not multivalent.

Dehejia's classification of the two Aśokan scenes under her "Sacred Sites" category does not do justice to their Buddhological content. Although I authored the sacred site idea and am pleased that she applies it in constructing her own theory (albeit without direct acknowledgment of my work), I do not feel that these Aśokan scenes are explainable solely as sacred site images. Their message is something greater. Of course, Bodh Gayā and Rāmagrāma are sacred sites, but much more is implied by the scenes. One message behind the selection of these subjects may have been to show a paradigmatic king demonstrating the way to honor the Buddha through his relics at the sacred sites.<sup>64</sup> Strong notes regarding the Rāmagrāma story that the emphasis in the *Aśokāvadāna* is "at least nominally on the value of devotion to the relics, whether it be the devotion of Aśoka or of the nāgas."<sup>65</sup> The two compositions at Sāñcī showing Aśokan themes portray his reverence for the relics and are a paradigmatic demonstration of the highest level of lay worship. As Strong explains, one of Aśoka's most important actions was to redistribute the Buddha's relics into 84,000 *stūpas*, which, I might add, reflects the desire to make them more accessible to devotees.<sup>66</sup> It was after this act that he was no longer called Aśoka-the-Fierce but Dharmāśoka.<sup>67</sup> Such an analysis melds perfectly with the evidence I have offered regarding the importance of relics in Buddhism.<sup>68</sup> That such a composition is illustrated adorning a monument that is itself a *stūpa*—a *stūpa* founded by Aśoka and almost certainly housing a portion of the relics retrieved from the other seven *droṇa stūpas*—may not be coincidental.

These two scenes do not contain emblems; rather, the tree shrine and the Rāmagrāma *stūpa* seem to serve as themselves in the narrative and not as surrogates. If the Bodh Gayā tree shrine and the Rāmagrāma *stūpa* are intended to indicate their respective sites, they do so as both key elements in each narrative and as participants in

the story, not as symbols. I see little reason to bring in a discussion of multivalency—or of aniconism—in the interpretation of these two compositions. Further, to distill the content of the scenes, with their emphasis on Aśoka's activities on behalf of Buddhism, to simple representations of sacred sites indicated by a tree or a *stūpa* fails to acknowledge the underlying message of piety and devotion expressed by these narratives.

Dehejia's discussion of her figures 15, 16, and 17 (figs. 13, 14, and 15, respectively) corroborates the theories I have proposed, particularly in my *Art Journal* article. She notes that some reliefs show the *stūpa* and the pillar as memorials erected at sacred pilgrimage sites and that in these cases the *stūpa* and the pillar<sup>69</sup> do not indicate the presence of the Buddha.<sup>70</sup> This section is illustrated by a relief at Sāñcī showing the worship of a *stūpa* by people dressed in non-Indian garb (fig. 13), which I published in *Art of Ancient India* with the same interpretation;<sup>71</sup> a relief that she identifies as showing Sārnāth due to the presence of a wheel-topped pillar being worshiped by people and the presence of deer below (fig. 14); and a



FIG. 13 (Dehejia fig. 15). Devotion at a *Stūpa*. On north gateway of *Stūpa* I at Sāñcī, Madhya Pradesh, India. Ca. second–third decade of first century C.E. Photo: American Institute of Indian Studies.



relief that she identifies as a depiction of Bodh Gayā for it shows the *bodhi* tree and a temple beneath it (fig. 15). Because her interpretation derives from mine, it follows that I am in general agreement with this portion of Dehejia's discussion. However, while Dehejia interprets the *stūpa* in figure 13, the wheel-topped pillar in figure 14, and the *bodhi* tree and temple in figure 15 as emblems, I contend—unless it can be shown otherwise—that they are simply depicted as themselves, as any other landmarks or sacred foci of a site might be.

While discussing these three compositions (figs. 13–15), Dehejia addresses a point I made in my *Art Journal* article, although she misunderstands the implications of my remark. In summarizing my proposal that many of the so-called aniconic compositions are worship scenes at Buddhist sites, I state that these scenes express concepts central to the practice of Buddhism during the period of the creation of the art works, “particularly relating to the exaltation of lay worship.”<sup>72</sup> Dehejia takes issue with the emphasis on lay worship as opposed to worship by monks at sacred sites (58–

59). However, she develops the idea beyond what I stated or intended. I do not believe that worship of the Buddha's relics was the exclusive domain of lay worshipers and have never claimed nor intended to claim that the clergy did not practice veneration of the relics.<sup>73</sup> But I do maintain that the many artistic renderings of devotion to relics—seen in the reliefs from Sāñcī, Bhārhut, and related sites—show lay worshipers, not clergy. In fact, monks and nuns are conspicuously absent in this artistic repertoire. When I write in my *Art Journal* article that “Further, the scene is clearly an exaltation of Buddhist devotion, specifically lay devotion, since the figures are lay worshipers, as indicated by their secular garb,”<sup>74</sup> I am not excluding monastic worship at Buddhist sites—I am merely explaining what is portrayed in the art. When I suggest that the message of these particular monuments, as envisioned by the artists, patrons, and donors, emphasized lay worship, this does not mean that the contemporaneous religious practices did not include the veneration of relics by the clergy.

Dehejia's statement that “It is strange that lay



FIG. 14 (Dehejia fig. 16). Devotion at a Wheel-topped Pillar at Sārnāth. On south gateway of Stūpa I at Sāñcī, Madhya Pradesh, India. Ca. second–third decade of first century C.E. Photo: American Institute of Indian Studies.



FIG. 15 (Dehejia fig. 17). *Bodhi* Tree and Temple, possibly at Bodh Gayā. On south gateway of Stūpa I at Sāñcī, Madhya Pradesh, India. Ca. second–third decade of first century C.E. Photo: American Institute of Indian Studies.



worship alone should be highlighted by those who wish to explain emblematic reliefs as portrayals of pilgrimage sites" (58) is followed by an endnote number. From the sentence, it might be expected that the endnote would contain a reference to "those" who "wish to explain." Instead, without citing me, her note refers to my statement that the "emphasis on sacred *pīṭhas* and pilgrimage to them in Buddhism has never waned" (66 n. 37).<sup>75</sup> Not only is she apparently unaware of the extensive artistic evidence that proves this point, which I will discuss in detail in my book, but she assumes that proof for something in Buddhist practice would be manifest in the art—and the surviving art at that.<sup>76</sup> But are we to understand that Gandhāra, Ajañtā, and the Gupta monuments—which Dehejia names—represent all of Buddhism and its art and that what is manifest in other artistic traditions constitutes aberrations? A glance at the history of Buddhism documents what I have said quite thoroughly.<sup>77</sup> Why representations of lay worship of trees, pillars, and *stūpas* do not occur prominently in Gandhāra, at Ajañtā, or on Gupta monuments I cannot at this point say, although I contend that these artistic traditions emphatically do incorporate lay worshipers, who, though usually very tiny, frequently appear as devotees in Buddhist reliefs.<sup>78</sup>

In the same note, Dehejia changes the subject again and quotes my *Art Journal* article, claiming that I take a "less rigid stand on aniconism" in one of my endnotes. While I reserve the right to change my stand in the future—as any good scholar and ethical human being should—I repeat what I have stated before in this article: I have never said that there are no aniconic images. I have only argued that the aniconic theory is inadequate as a single, all-embracing theory to explain the art of early Buddhism. Clearly, there is much more occurring in the art than simple avoidance of Buddha images. Even Dehejia's own work, which accepts that there are stories about Aśoka, that there are representations of sites, *jātakas*, and other subjects not focusing on the life of the Buddha, demonstrates that not all of the art requires an aniconic or life-of-the-Buddha explanation. What I stated in my endnote about the possibility that there might be some aniconic compositions does not represent a change in the position I propose in the body of my text; it is a statement about what my future research might discover.

Although Dehejia maintains it is strange that lay worship is highlighted by those explaining emblematic reliefs as pilgrimage sites,

she recognizes the fact that so many of the reliefs do show lay worshipers. But her explanation of the prevalence of lay worshipers in these compositions is unsatisfying. She says: "These depictions of lay worship may have occurred by chance in the course of portraying, on each monument, no more than six to eight scenes of worship" (58–59). While I disagree with her number,<sup>79</sup> it is more important to ask whether it is defensible to argue that such depictions may have occurred by chance. If the creation of these subjects is a matter of chance, then could it be "by chance" that the Buddha image is absent in the scenes she identifies as demonstrating the Buddha's aniconic presence? In other words, a position must be taken on whether the elements included in the artistic renderings are there by choice (whether it is the choice of the artist, the patron, or some other authority) or by chance. I prefer to begin with the premise that the works of art and the elements they include reflect deliberate choices unless proved otherwise. And Dehejia does not prove otherwise; the popularity of the lay worshiper motif in itself seems to be evidence that it was intentionally included. Concomitantly, the scarcity of clergy in the scenes must reflect a choice on the part of the makers. If Dehejia is implying that the depictions of lay worshipers represent the chance survival of some reliefs, I maintain that it is still puzzling that among the hundreds of surviving examples there is an apparent lack of compositions representing the clergy.

While agreeing that sacred places are important, Dehejia says that "it is questionable whether, in the early Buddhist ethos, pilgrimage to *āṛthas* ever took priority over the life of the Buddha"<sup>80</sup> and, equally, whether artistic depictions of pilgrimage sites took precedence over portrayals of events from the life of the Buddha" (56). If she is referring to my work, and I assume this is the case, let me clarify my point. I have said that "I suggest that the early Buddhist art of India was not primarily concerned with the biography of Śākyamuni Buddha,"<sup>81</sup> but this is not the same as claiming that artistic depictions of pilgrimage sites took precedence over portrayals of events from the life of the Buddha. By suggesting that life scenes of Śākyamuni Buddha are not the primary subject matter of the early Buddhist art, I have not implied that scenes depicting sacred sites are the most important. As the reader of this article will see, I believe that there are a number of subjects in the early Buddhist art of India, which include

but are not restricted to sacred “site” scenes and what Dehejia calls “pageantry” scenes. But I stand by my claim that, counting these varieties of subjects, those that are clearly and solely scenes of the Buddha’s life events are in a minority, if they exist in any numbers at all.

As proof for her statement, Dehejia writes that “Aśoka’s pilgrimage emphasized the physical form in which the Buddha had lived the life that was being experienced, not merely the sanctity acquired by the site of an event” (56).<sup>82</sup> But the *Aśokāvadāna* suggests another interpretation, for it records that when Aśoka decides to undertake his pilgrimage, he is said to have fallen at the feet of the elder Upagupta and said: “Elder, I want to honor the places where the Blessed One lived, and mark them with signs as a favor to posterity.”<sup>83</sup> That the events and the Buddha’s physical presence are an important part of a site, its history, and ambiance is undeniable. But this does not change what I believe is being shown in much of the art. People who live after the time of the Buddha cannot see him at the sacred sites associated with him, nor can they witness the events of his life; they can only get as close to the Buddha as possible by being at the place where the events occurred, and especially being in the presence of his bodily relics. It is always a substitute but a necessary one. Dehejia says that the eyewitness accounts of those beings who saw the Buddha “stress the person of the Buddha and his charismatic qualities” (56). I do not dispute this, but when she concludes from this premise that “Even in a pilgrimage cycle, the emphasis is on the desire to experience the Buddha himself in all his glory” (56), then I question this leap of logic. That is, although there are “eyewitness” accounts describing the glorious physical being that was the Buddha, it is difficult to understand how those accounts can be used to draw conclusions about the nature of pilgrimage cycles. As has become clear from the many studies that have recently emerged on the practice of religious pilgrimage, the purposes of pilgrims are generally multifaceted. While the ostensible purposes might include the “desire to experience the Buddha himself in all his glory,”<sup>84</sup> this seems far too simplistic an explanation for a complicated cultural phenomenon. Dehejia’s statement almost seems to argue against her position since any individual who went on a Buddhist pilgrimage to a site where the Buddha had once been and expected to see the Buddha there would be disappointed. What they would find would be relics or

reminders, such as the *bodhi* tree. Indeed, this is precisely my point: the Buddha is gone, but the places (and the relics and monuments at them) preserve something of his presence.

Dehejia then moves to the statement that “It is difficult to sustain the argument that early Buddhist artists and devotees were not primarily concerned with the biography of the Buddha” (56–57). I suggest that early Buddhist artists and devotees were probably very concerned with the biography of the Buddha, but the scenes that I discussed in my *Art Journal* article do not show the biography of the Buddha; they show people being concerned with the biography of the Buddha, if you will. Any comments I have made about the relative importance of the life of Śākyamuni in the art should not be misconstrued to mean that I do not believe in the Buddha’s centrality to the Buddhist religion. My analysis is intended to describe only what is visible in the surviving art works under discussion.

Two sculptures from Amarāvati depict images of Buddhas installed as objects of worship at what may be sacred sites (her figs. 20 and 21, discussed on 60). The first of these compositions formed an important basis of my *Art Journal* article and was crucial to my comments regarding time and place (fig. 16).<sup>85</sup> The second relief, known today only from a drawing, shows a similar subject (Dehejia’s fig. 21).<sup>86</sup> Dehejia says that the sculptures are “noticed here as possible representations of worship at local sites” (60), but she does not clarify how this relates to her theory of multivalency or how it relates to the theory that rejects aniconism as an all-embracing explanation for the early art of India. In the “Sites” subsection of her text she explains neither the implications of local site worship nor the idea of showing a representation of an image that was being venerated at such a local site. She says that “Since the Amarāvati *stūpa* railing itself is renowned for its circular carved medallions, the scene appears to represent a local site where one such medallion was worshipped” (60). These two thoughts do not follow.<sup>87</sup>

Dehejia expresses concern over the depiction of footprints beneath the throne in the Amarāvati sculpture. Elsewhere in her text, she claims that the depiction of footprints in the Bhārhut panel that I identify as showing a worship scene at the site of Śāṅkāsya (fig. 6) and in the Swāt panel (fig. 5) are substitutes for a Buddha image (53). She claims that “the portrayal of footprints in place of the bodily image can only suggest a





FIG. 16 (Dehejia fig. 20). Composition Showing Devotion to an Image of a Buddha.  
From Amarāvati, Andhra Pradesh, India.  
Ca. second century C.E. Amarāvati Site Museum.  
Photo: Amarāvati Site Museum.

tradition of aniconism" (53). Yet regarding the Amarāvati composition (fig. 16), she claims that footprints are shown "to reinforce the sanctity of the medallion" (60). The basis for this suggestion is not explained. Is this assumption drawn from Buddhological, inscriptional, literary, or other evidence? And if the problem of the presence of footprints can be dismissed so easily here, in a scene that clearly does not require a Buddha figure since it includes an image of a Buddha, how then can Dehejia be so stringent in her puzzlement over the presence of footprints in other compositions, such as the two so-called "Descent" scenes from Swāt and Bhārhut (53)?

In her discussion of these two Amarāvati reliefs, Dehejia then cites Jain evidence regarding the installation of plaques on thrones beneath trees (60–61). However, she does not clarify the date of the Jain evidence nor its implications for the study of early Buddhist art. She concludes this section by saying that "Further studies may clarify the exact significance of these two intriguing site-related portrayals" (61). Here, it seems, she has chosen to ignore my work.

**The Emblems of the Tree, the Pillar, and the *Stūpa* as an Attribute [of the Faith].**<sup>88</sup> Dehejia's use of the term *attribute*, which is the basis of her third "valid" category, is not explained in her text. Does Buddhism have attributes? If so, what constitutes an attribute? Her explanation that "Not infrequently, the main intention of the artist depicting a pillar, tree, or *stūpa* was to emphasize the Buddhist truth to which it attests" (63) does not substantiate an equation between a Buddhist truth and an attribute. Dehejia states that sometimes "the tree<sup>89</sup> is intended to recall the divine wisdom of the Buddha, while the pillar suggests his sacred doctrine" (45).<sup>90</sup> She explains that the *stūpa* may not be the great decease nor a sacred *stūpa* site but rather the Buddha's achievement in finally severing the bonds of rebirth (63). How is it known specifically that "the tree" is meant to recall the divine wisdom of the Buddha? And, assuming that the (*bodhi*) tree is intended to recall the Buddha's divine wisdom, can the Buddha's wisdom be categorized as an "attribute"? Some would say that it is the very essence of the religion. Upon what basis is it surmised that the pillar suggests the Buddha's sacred doctrine? Wouldn't the meaning of a pillar depend in part at least upon the motifs with which it is decorated? And should the Buddha's doctrine be characterized simply as an "attribute of the faith"? How



FIG. 17 (Dehejia fig. 22). Devotion to *Triratna*. From Bactro-Gandhāra region. Ca. second–third century C.E. Peshawar Museum. Photo: Peshawar Museum.

is it known that the *stūpa* represents the Buddha's severance of the bonds of rebirth? Is there textual, inscriptional, or other evidence to document these speculations? In what context are these ideas supported Buddhologically, and how is it known that they apply during the period under discussion? A statement that the equivalents cited are true does not make them so.

As examples of artistic renderings that she believes depict Buddhist attributes, Dehejia refers to the "emblems" carved on the "dies" or blocks between the architraves and on the up-rights between the architraves of the Sāñcī *torāṇas*.<sup>91</sup> Without further explanation, it is difficult to understand how these representations might have a different purpose than, for example, the one Dehejia illustrates as her figure 17 (fig. 15). She further notes that "due to their capacity for multiple references, emblems intended to indicate the attributes of the Buddhist faith also serve to remind the viewer of the Buddha himself and the site with which an attribute is associated" (63). But how are we to know when and where the emblem means what?

Dehejia illustrates only two sculptures under the category of emblems as attributes of the faith. The first (her fig. 22, discussed on 63) shows the worship of the *triratna* (fig. 17). This carving is a Kuṣāṇa-period work from the Bactro-Gandhāra region and is not representative of the early Buddhist art at sites like Sāñcī and Bhārhut; its implications for the earlier artistic tradition under discussion are unclear. Dehejia discusses the *triratna* as a Buddhist emblem referring to the "three jewels of Buddhism," that is, the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha. While the *triratna*'s principal meaning may be a reference to the

triple gem of Buddhism, it is shown in this composition in a way that does not differ materially from the ways that trees, *stūpas*, and other motifs are sometimes used in the art of Bhārhut, Sāñcī, and other early sites. Installed as an object of devotion that is being revered, in this case by members of the clergy, this representation depicts not merely an emblem with a literal meaning but a scene in which that emblem is under worship.<sup>92</sup> Therefore, I propose that such a scene greatly resembles many of the reliefs I have analyzed.

Curiously, Dehejia links her discussion of the *triratna* with mention of the Buddha's halo, saying that "Gandhāran panels centering on the halo, or *triratna*, depict neither the worship of the Buddha in aniconic form nor worship at any specific site; rather they represent homage paid to the Buddhist faith itself through adoration of its attributive emblems" (63). Dehejia's equation of the halo to the *triratna* is puzzling since the *triratna* is an abstract symbol not associated with the Buddha's physical person and is not a relic. The halo, like the Buddha's robe, his begging bowl, the *bodhi* tree, and other objects he used, is considered a *paribhogika* relic and would have been worshiped as such. Justification for claiming that the halo is one of the "attributive emblems" of Buddhism is not provided. Further, if the halo is an attribute, what does it signify?

Dehejia identifies what she calls the "most impressive use of emblems as attributes" (63) in the decoration of the dome of the great *stūpa* at Amarāvātī and illustrates an example (63–64) (fig. 18).<sup>93</sup> She explains that in the lowest register these carvings illustrate either a tree sheltering a seat or the Buddha himself; the central register usually portrays a wheel upon a pillar, although sometimes it has a representation of a preaching Buddha; and the uppermost register invariably shows a representation of a *stūpa*.<sup>94</sup> By looking at the three compositions occupying the three registers of the Amarāvātī dome slab, I cannot determine how they differ from a number of scenes that Dehejia might identify as representing sacred sites or the aniconic presence of the Buddha. Each composition contains a central motif flanked by worshipers (lay worshipers, I might note). Yet Dehejia claims that "On this occasion, the tree or the image beneath the tree represents neither the event of the enlightenment nor the site of the event; the wheel or the preaching Buddha represents neither the first sermon nor its site; and the *stūpa* stands neither for the great





FIG. 18 (Dehejia fig. 24). Three-tiered dome slab showing, from bottom: Devotion to Throne and Bodhi Tree; middle: Devotion to Throne and Wheel-topped Pillar; top: Devotion to Stūpa. From Amarāvati, Andhra Pradesh, India. Ca. second-third century C.E. British Museum, London. Photo: Trustees of the British Museum.

decease of the Buddha nor for a *stūpa* site" (64). Instead, she claims, the "intention seems to lie in quite another direction" (64), suggesting that the emblems (motifs) "repetitively reiterate the belief in the three jewels of Buddhism, that is, the Buddha (lowest register), the *Dhamma* or doctrine (central panel), and the *Samgha* . . . (upper register)" (64). In other words, Dehejia equates these three motifs with the meaning of the *triratna*. As support for this proposal, she provides an endnote (66 n. 43) in which she suggests I. K. Sarma's agreement with such an interpretation. Apparently, Sarma told Dehejia that recently unearthed dome slabs from Amarāvati have the syllables *bo* and *dha* inscribed on them. Dehejia does not explain where these inscriptions occur in relation to the compositions on slabs, or whether they occur only or primarily on slabs that show the *bodhi* tree and the *dharmacakra*. Since, as Dehejia herself notes, *bo* might stand for *bodhi* tree and *dha* might stand for *dharmacakra*, I am uncertain how these inscriptions therefore prove that the *bodhi* tree and the *dharmacakra* appear in these scenes as attributes standing for the Buddha and the Dharma.

Dehejia's equation of the *stūpa* and the *Samgha* is given the following explanation: "I suggest it was because the relic mound was indeed the center of the monastery and the very *raison d'être* for the formation of the monastic community that congregated around a *stūpa*" (66 n. 43). In my view, this thinking requires a vast leap of faith, for the *stūpa* might stand for other things as well. Further, such a claim about the centrality of the relic mound needs verification and explanation regarding whether this is always true or only at some sites and for some sects. If this is correct, I am delighted, since this information provides further support to my theory that places great emphasis on the relic cult and not simply the narration of the life of the Buddha.

Dehejia continues that monks and lay worshippers who would have circumambulated [the Amarāvati *stūpa*] would have had on their lips the "refuge" creed, taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the *Samgha*, but she does not explain how she knows what they would have been saying. Would these same words be spoken during the ritual practices at other *stūpas*, and, if so, then why does the configuration occur here alone? Dehejia further claims that the reliefs would have been a visual affirmation [to the largely illiterate people] of their faith in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the *Samgha*. Again, this speculation is stated

without external proof. Most importantly, Dehejia does not define what it is about these particular compositions that forces a different interpretation from the aniconic presence or site interpretations (64).<sup>95</sup> Not only is the slab from Amarāvātī similar in type to scenes that she herself might interpret as Buddha life events or site scenes, but she does not provide the Buddhological sources of documentation for her explanations of the meanings of what she calls the emblems. Her suggestion that in this case the tree or the “image” (I suggest absence of an image) beneath the tree represents the Buddha, the wheel represents the Dharma, and the *stūpa* denotes the Saṅgha, is, therefore, unfathomable.

#### DEHEJIA’S TWO PREREQUISITES

Dehejia’s belief in the use of emblems in early Buddhist art is the cornerstone from which she builds her argument for multivalency and is the crux of what she calls the “two critical and complementary prerequisites for the accurate interpretation of early Buddhist art” (45). The first of her two prerequisites is “an awareness of the multiple meanings conveyed by the major Buddhist emblems of the tree, the pillar, and the *stūpa*” (45), and the “second crucial prerequisite for interpreting the emblems is to acknowledge their multilayered significance” (45). The similarity in the way Dehejia defines her two prerequisites makes it difficult to establish and understand their distinctiveness. In other words, what is the difference between having “an awareness of the multiple meanings” of the emblems and “acknowledging their multilayered significance?” In addition, when the concept of the two prerequisites is introduced, it is explained that they are for the accurate interpretation of early Buddhist art; when the second prerequisite is introduced, it is identified as a prerequisite for interpreting “the emblems” (45, para. 4). Therefore, it is unclear whether the prerequisites are for the interpretation of early Buddhist art or for interpretation of emblems, or whether a distinction is implied at all.

From the context of Dehejia’s article and her discussion of works of art, I have assumed that the prerequisites are to be used to interpret the art, not the emblems.<sup>96</sup> I infer that in the case of her first prerequisite a single motif can have multiple meanings, but, depending on circumstances, one or another of the meanings would be intended (45). The second prerequisite apparently means that references to multiple meanings were made

simultaneously by an emblem within a single work of art (45). My understanding, then, is that the difference between her prerequisites is that in one case the motif carries the possibility of multiple meanings but in a specific context manifests primarily one of them, while in the other case the motif might carry multiple meanings simultaneously.

In addition to this lack of clarity in definition, which makes it difficult to know how to apply the two prerequisites to the art, it is doubtful whether the two prerequisites are applicable to all examples of early Buddhist art.<sup>97</sup> If these two concepts cannot be applied to every work of art in this corpus, then they are not prerequisites. For example, the lower panel of what Dehejia calls the “Enlightenment Face” of the “Prasenajit Pillar” from Bhārhut (fig. 4) does not even contain a nonfigurative motif that can be interpreted as an emblem; the scene above it contains a tree, but even Dehejia does not believe that the tree serves as an emblem in this context; and the two Aśokan reliefs (figs. 11 and 12) contain nonfigurative elements, but it is difficult to sustain the notion that their principal role is emblematic. Without the presence of emblems, the prerequisites do not apply to these and similar works of art.

Second, if my interpretation of the two prerequisites is correct, they are mutually exclusive: a single emblem cannot suggest only one meaning and more than one meaning simultaneously. In order for both prerequisites to be present in a single artistic composition, the work of art would probably have to contain a minimum of two emblems, one of which would stand for an aniconic representation of a Buddha, or a sacred site, or an “attribute of the faith,” while the other would embody two, or perhaps even all three, levels of meanings simultaneously.<sup>98</sup> Since I suspect that the Indic artists would not be so contrived as to create an artistic composition containing one emblem that had only one meaning and a second that had as many as three, I would argue that it is unexpected that a single work would manifest both prerequisites. Therefore, it is impossible for a single “emblem” to embody both the first and second prerequisites and unlikely that a given work of art would do so.

Finally, I suggest that unless there is documentary evidence that the artists and patrons responsible for the creation of these artistic compositions were aware of and applied these principles to their art, they cannot be considered prerequisites, for prerequisites belong to the creators, not





FIG. 19 (Dehejia fig. 1). King Prasenajit and His Entourage Showing Devotion at a Shrine with a Wheel. From Bhārhut, Madhya Pradesh, India. Ca. 100–80 B.C.E. Indian Museum, Calcutta.

Photo: American Institute of Indian Studies.

the interpreters of the art. If they are instead general principles that reflect patterns found in the art and that can be used to help interpret the art, then this is another matter altogether.

#### METHODOLOGY

Unless there is agreement about the way in which knowledge about works of art is constructed, there is little chance that different scholars will agree in their conclusions. To understand the different approaches that scholars, such as Dehejia and I, might take to interpret the early Buddhist art of India, it is necessary to address some methodological issues, particularly the discrimination between internal and external evidence. I shall use one of the sculptures Dehejia illustrates, a composition from Bhārhut, and her related discussion as a case study (fig. 19).

This rectangular composition shows a railing

and gateway in the foreground that form the forward boundary of the precinct of a shrine in a courtyard. In the courtyard, an entourage of figures, some in a chariot, others on horseback and elephant, moves in a clockwise direction around the central structure. The shrine contains a representation of a Buddhist wheel and two male figures with hands in respectful postures venerating the wheel. A pair of palm trees flanks the upper portion of the scene. There are two inscriptions contained within the composition of this relief: the one on the roof of the gateway reads “*rājā Pasenaji Kosalo*” (King Pasenajit [Prasenajit] the Kosala [Kauśala]);<sup>99</sup> the second, which appears on the roof of the main building, reads “*bhagavato dhamachakam*” (The Wheel of the Doctrine of the Holy One).<sup>100</sup>

From the internal evidence contained within the relief, that is, the pictorial information as well as the two inscriptions, we can surmise the following:<sup>101</sup>

1. that one (or more; see below) of the figures in the composition represents King Prasenajit of Kosala;<sup>102</sup>
2. that the wheel within the upper shrine is a *dharmacakra* (Buddhist wheel of law) “of” the holy one (*bhagavato*);
3. that an entourage of figures, including King Prasenajit, is circumambulating the *dharmacakra* shrine in a clockwise fashion, as may be determined from the sequencing of the figures around the shrine, and that the entourage will exit the precinct of the shrine through the gateway at the lower right, as suggested by the figure on horseback coming forward through the gateway;
4. that two figures (possibly the same person depicted twice; see below) are inside the shrine venerating the wheel.

But a number of questions are not specifically answered within the composition. Some can be answered through the use of sources external to the relief, while others may never be answered. Most importantly, simply from looking at the composition and translating the inscriptions, we do not know who King Prasenajit is in terms of his historicity—such as when he lived, where he lived, what his life stands for Buddhologically, and why he is shown in the art; we do not know the identification of the shrine or its location; we do not know the occasion that is immortalized in the composition (that is, why King Prasenajit is visit-

ing this shrine); we do not know who built the shrine, when it was built, or why it was built; and we do not know the specific identity of any of the other figures in the scene, though we can determine from their costume and physical features that all of them are male. Further, we do not know how this composition fits into its archaeological and artistic context at Bhārhut, and ultimately into the whole corpus of early Buddhist art, that is, who made it, why it was made, and the purpose of the makers (including both artists and patrons) in portraying this scene as opposed to other possible subjects that were known to them.

Although Dehejia does not cite the external sources she uses to interpret the scene—a problem that persists in her discussion of virtually all of the works of art in her article<sup>103</sup>—she makes a number of suppositions, interpretations, and claims (47), which include:

1. that King Prasenajit built a temple in honor of the Buddha (she seems to imply that the temple was built at Śrāvastī but does not state this outright);<sup>104</sup>
2. that King Prasenajit visited this temple (presumably with an entourage);
3. that the site being shown in the scene does not represent Sārnāth, the location of the Buddha's first sermon;
4. that the label identifying King Prasenajit suggests what she infers to be "the actual historical event" in which the monarch visited the Buddha at Prasenajit's capital of Śrāvastī and listened to his sermon;
5. that the wheel is portrayed "as an object of worship in the shrine erected by King Prasenajit and to recall the sermon given there rather than to indicate the actual presence of the Buddha" (47);
6. that there is an "inevitable and surely intentional" conflation of meanings conveyed by the relief: "The shrine was built by King Prasenajit at the spot where the Buddha had preached to him; undoubtedly, the artist intended that the relief should also recall that event" (47);
7. that "As a nonfigural emblem, the wheel emphasizes the Law and also refers to the Buddha as the Giver of that Law" (47);<sup>105</sup>
8. that most early Buddhist visual narratives contain this double (Dehejia actually provides a triple) layer of meaning; and
9. that once this concept of multiple meanings is accepted, "aniconism ceases to be such a vexed problem" (47).

Some of Dehejia's claims probably derive from secondary sources, that is, writers in recent or relatively recent times who have sought to interpret the art and who have in turn based their interpretations upon presuppositions, such as the belief in aniconism. In her analysis of this composition Dehejia adopts a position that draws upon that first presented by Alexander Cunningham more than a hundred years ago and which has been generally accepted since that time. Specifically, Cunningham identifies the building housing the wheel as the "Punya Sāla" (Hall of [Religious] Merit) that he claims was built by King Prasenajit at Śrāvastī for the use of the Buddha.<sup>106</sup> One of the earliest believers in the concept of aniconism,<sup>107</sup> Cunningham suggests that in this composition the wheel is a symbol that takes the place of the Buddha himself (though why he would expect the Buddha to be sitting perpetually in the temple built by Prasenajit is not evident). He claims that the wheel was intended "as a type of the advancement of the Buddhist faith by preaching, and thus becomes an emblem of Buddha the Teacher, in the same way that the *Bodhimanda*, or seat on which Sākya Muni sat for six years<sup>108</sup> in meditation, is used as a symbol of Buddha the Ascetic in all the Bharhut Sculptures, where the figure of Buddha himself is never represented."<sup>109</sup>

Some claims made by Dehejia, and others before her such as Cunningham, are unverified from Buddhist literature, but others can be supported. A brief search through textual sources reveals that:<sup>110</sup>

1. King Prasenajit was a contemporary of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni, which allows us to infer that the "*bhagavato*" referred to in the inscription is Śākyamuni and not another Buddha;
2. King Prasenajit was a devotee of Śākyamuni and was converted by him when the king heard a sermon by Śākyamuni;
3. The conversion of King Prasenajit by the Buddha took place at the Jetavana in Anāthapiṇḍada's park, near Śrāvastī;<sup>111</sup>
4. King Prasenajit and the Buddha had an ongoing discourse and King Prasenajit made frequent visits to the Buddha to ask questions and receive the Buddha's wisdom.<sup>112</sup> These conversations took place at Śrāvastī and possibly other venues as well.<sup>113</sup>
5. Sārnāth, the place of Śākyamuni's first sermon, was situated within the Kosala kingdom



of King Prasenajit, and there is no reason to suppose that the king never visited Sārnāth.<sup>114</sup> Dehejia's claim that this relief does not represent Sārnāth, therefore, cannot be assumed *a priori*. Archaeological sources reveal that there was a temple at Sārnāth at least since Aśokan times and that it had a wheel as the main object of worship; it is possible that another early patron had built such a temple there during the lifetime of the Buddha and that therefore Prasenajit could be shown visiting Sārnāth.<sup>115</sup>

6. King Prasenajit may have built a shrine at Śrāvastī (perhaps to honor the Buddha), and it may have had a wheel as the main object of devotion. The seventh-century Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang describes some ruins at Śrāvastī, including a "Great Hall of the Law" (*Saddharma Mahāsālā*) built by Prasenajit.<sup>116</sup> However, the inscription in the relief that refers to the "Holy One's Wheel of Law" is not enough information to identify the site. (A detailed examination of clues in the relief, such as the two trees, might be helpful.)

Even a more exhaustive search or the discovery of new materials is unlikely to provide the type of detail that Dehejia, Cunningham, and others have accorded this relief. Even if it is assumed that the Buddhist wheel is intended to serve as a symbol of the Buddha's teachings, it cannot be determined that only one temple housing a wheel as the main object of devotion existed during King Prasenajit's time—whether built by him or not. The existence of the temple that Xuanzang refers to at Śrāvastī does not negate the possibility that other similar temples had been built at other places where the Buddha taught.<sup>117</sup> The inscriptions only identify the king and the Buddhist wheel but do not specify the site or the event being commemorated.

Further, the relief does not contain internal evidence to support the claim that the wheel is a symbol replacing the Buddha or that it serves as an emblem of the Buddha as a teacher. Cunningham's statement must have been based upon a belief in the concept of aniconism as a presupposition for interpreting the art. Because Cunningham believed that the wheel served as a substitute for a figure of the Buddha, he titled the section of his text dealing with this relief "Visit of Prasenajita to Buddha" rather than "Visit of Prasenajit to a Temple with a Wheel" or something similar.<sup>118</sup> While Dehejia modifies this aspect of Cunningham's analysis, she retains the notion that the

wheel is an emblem serving both as a reminder of the sermon the Buddha gave to Prasenajit and as a reference to the Buddha as Giver of the Law (47). She says that a conflation of meanings is conveyed by the relief and that this conflation "is inevitable and surely intentional" (47) and, further, that: "The shrine was built by King Prasenajit at the spot where the Buddha had preached to him; undoubtedly, the artist intended that the relief should also recall the event. As a nonfigural emblem, the wheel emphasizes the Law and also refers to the Buddha as the Giver of that Law" (47).

While I concur that the wheel might be a reminder of the sermon (or one of the sermons, possibly the conversion sermon) the Buddha gave to Prasenajit and at the same time a reference to the Buddha as Giver of the Law, a "reminder of" and a "reference to" are not the same as a "representation of" a subject. I suggest that this relief is a representation of King Prasenajit performing veneration at a shrine that contains a Buddhist wheel and that these other meanings, while possibly implicit in the concept of the wheel, are not represented directly in the scene. The multivalent meanings that Dehejia identifies may be inherent layers of the wheel's meaning but are not what is being depicted in the relief. Thus, I contend that the relief portrays a single subject—Prasenajit's visit—and that, while the wheel is imbued with multiple layers of meaning, the additional layers do not constitute interchangeable subjects for the relief.

Such a scene expresses what I suggest is a popular and important theme on early Buddhist monuments—the devotion and piety of followers of the Buddha.<sup>119</sup> Devotees might include humans (both royalty and commoners), celestials, and animals. The Buddhological message of a relief like the Prasenajit composition, I propose, may not be the life of the Buddha in the biographical sense but rather the good works and spiritual evolution of someone like King Prasenajit that occurred through the teachings of the Buddha.<sup>120</sup> The frequent appearance of compositions with similar messages among the reliefs at Bhārhut, Sāñci, and other sites suggests that emphasis is being placed on the king. When shown on the early Buddhist monuments, such scenes are not intended to record events in the Buddha's life but rather to highlight the actions of his paradigmatic, faithful devotees. That a Tibetan monarch many centuries after the lifetime of King Prasenajit would claim descent from him suggests that

King Prasenajit was a model of kingly Buddhist worship.<sup>121</sup> If Prasenajit's importance was this great to the Tibetans many centuries after the creation of the Bhārhut carvings, it can be inferred that his renown was also considerable at the time the Bhārhut monument was created.<sup>122</sup>

Buddhist piety is manifest in many of the scenes that Dehejia refers to as "site scenes." But it is also manifest in other scenes that traditionally have been viewed as aniconic representations of events of the Buddha's life. The Bhārhut roundel showing Anāthapiṇḍada covering the ground with pieces of gold to provide the Jetavana monastery for the Buddha is also an example of this theme.<sup>123</sup> While the Buddha was the recipient of Anāthapiṇḍada's generosity, what is being shown in the composition is not the Buddha receiving the gift but Anāthapiṇḍada paying the exorbitant price of the gift. The scene is, therefore, a demonstration of the generous piety of one of the Buddha's followers, not a biographical subject in the Buddha's life.

By not distinguishing between motifs as references, reminders, and representations, Dehejia concludes that the Prasenajit relief was intended to convey multivalent meanings. But, if her assertion that "Most early Buddhist visual narratives contain this double [*sic* for triple?] layer of meaning" (47) is based on the type of evidence she presents for this composition, then her claim may be insupportable.

This methodological discussion distinguishes between internal evidence contained within an artistic work and the external evidence that can be used to amplify the interpretation of that work. The limitations of external sources are, unfortunately, extensive, not only because of their scarcity but because, frequently, they provide conflicting information. This discussion also attempts to demonstrate that it is necessary to reexamine the art unfettered by the lore and presuppositions that have been passed down from generation to generation as truths. Because the theory of aniconism is so deeply embedded within a matrix of more than a hundred years of scholarly thinking, any challenge to that theory is scrutinized with careful detail and exceptions and apparent contradictions may seem glaring. However, I suggest that the burden of proof should rest with those who seek to add layers of interpretation and symbolism external to what is shown in the art. If a relief seems to show the literal depiction of devotion by an early king such as Prasenajit, or other subjects, then the burden

of proving that it also is intended to communicate symbolic, emblematic, or other layers of meaning should belong to those who make the claim.

### *Dehejia and the Issue of Aniconism*

#### THE THEORY OF ANICONISM

The issue of aniconism plays two roles in Dehejia's article. First, the presupposition of aniconism is incorporated into her discussion of emblems and multivalency, particularly in the "Aniconic Presence" section. Second, her defense of the traditional theory of aniconism is a subtheme woven into her discourse. I have already addressed the first aspect and will only discuss Dehejia's treatment of the general question of aniconism here.

As mentioned above, Dehejia had two purposes in writing her article, one stated and one unstated. This duality is manifest throughout her article, as her text weaves between her stated purpose of demonstrating multivalency in the early art of Buddhism and her unstated purpose of defending the theory of aniconism against the ideas I have presented. Her discussion of aniconism is selective, and the transitions between her trains of thought are often left unstated, rendering the sequence of ideas difficult to follow. For example, after her discussion of her figure 1 (fig. 19) there is a digression about the problem of aniconism, which treats a number of separate topics and which is not clarified in relation to the theme and organization of her paper. I shall address the most significant of the issues raised in her article here.

#### THE "PAGEANTRY THEORY"

Dehejia discusses what she calls the "pageantry theory" in relation to a composition on one of the gateways at Sāñcī that I have published (fig. 2). She says that: "The pageantry theory proposed as an alternative to aniconism is riddled with complications; in particular, there is little evidence, if any, that Buddhism had a tradition akin to that of the Christian passion plays, in which events from a sacred biography were staged" (47). This statement must be clarified immediately. Neither I nor my husband John has ever hinted, much less claimed, that the Buddhists had a pageantry tradition akin to Christian passion plays.<sup>124</sup>

My own suggestion relates to the idea of celebrations of the main occasions of the Buddha's



life, some of which may have taken place at the actual sites of the events, rather than formal dramatic productions equivalent to passion plays.<sup>125</sup> In my discussion of the Sāñcī relief (fig. 2), I have called the scene “a processional celebration.”<sup>126</sup> Although later in the same discussion I use the term *pageant*—I say that some of the figures in the scene are not *devas* but rather actors in a pageant that recreates aspects of the event of Śākyamuni’s departure—I used the term *pageant* in the dictionary sense, not as the equivalent of a passion play. Specifically, although the literal translation of the Middle English *pagyn* or *padgeant* is “scene of a play,” the current English definitions are: 1) a mere show or pretense; 2) an ostentatious display; 3) a show or exhibition, especially an elaborate, colorful exhibition or spectacle, often with music, that consists of a series of tableaux of a loosely unified drama; or 4) a procession, usually with floats.<sup>127</sup> Any of these definitions could suit what I intend. Dehejia’s extrapolation and exaggeration of my suggestion cannot be justified. Further, when I used the term *actor* in reference to the figures carrying the horse in the relief, I intended to suggest that these individuals were participants playing a role in this circumstance and not that these individuals were necessarily professional actors. What I intended to convey was that there may have been reenactments as part of the celebration of events at sacred sites, possibly on anniversaries of Buddha life events. While Dehejia has not found in her “detailed search through Buddhist texts . . . any evidence of pageants” (65 n. 13), she has no means of concluding that her search and my search were identical and that I have not found evidence to support my proposal. It is curious that, without waiting to see what materials I present in my book, Dehejia felt confident that her own search would produce the same results as mine. Further, without knowing that every relevant literary work has survived, is available, and has been examined for this information, it is impossible to substantiate a claim that there is an absence of literary evidence.

Dehejia maintains the long-held view that the scene is a representation of the Great Departure of the Buddha (actually Bodhisattva) prior to his enlightenment. The traditional interpretation assumes that the relief represents the actual event and that the absence of the human figure of the Buddha-to-be on the horse is evidence of aniconism. As I have discussed above, Dehejia believes that in this scene the Buddha-to-be is shown

by emblems, but I have demonstrated that the Buddha-to-be’s presence, if it is intended in the scene, would have to be indicated by his absence, not by an emblem. Dehejia observes that if the scene is a reenactment, the fact that there is no human actor on the horse is anomalous (48). But, if the scene represents another subject, the absence of the figure might not be problematic. Further, if it is necessary that there be no anomalies for a scene to be correctly identified, then the anomalies in the composition that undermine Dehejia’s interpretation of the scene as an aniconic rendering of the Great Departure must also be considered.

Let us examine this relief in detail. At the left is a palace, or perhaps a city, peopled by men and women who are awake, not asleep. According to the generally known accounts regarding the Buddha-to-be’s departure, he left the palace quietly at night when the inhabitants were asleep.<sup>128</sup> The secrecy of the departure is a prevailing emphasis in textual accounts of the event.<sup>129</sup> Thus, if this composition represents the Great Departure, this aspect of the scene is incompatible with textual accounts. In front of the palace/city, a woman bows in apparent reverence before a pond with lotuses and ducks in it, again a theme that is not part of the usual Great Departure accounts. Apparently exiting from the city or palace gate is an entourage that includes a horse carried aloft by bearers (the horse’s visible front right leg is clearly above the ground). The manner in which the horse is carried is clarified the second and third times it appears; apparently, six bearers (three on the visible side of the horse and presumably three on the other side) bear the animal aloft. Textual accounts of the Great Departure usually mention four *devas* carrying the horse’s hooves.<sup>130</sup> The representation of six human males rather than *devas* not only contrasts with literary evidence but differs from what is found in Bactro-Gandhāran depictions of the Great Departure, where *devas* are clearly indicated.<sup>131</sup> Included in the entourage is a small male figure carrying a vessel; he appears just in front of the horse the first two times the horse is shown.<sup>132</sup> After the horse is shown the second time, the entourage arrives at a tree enshrined in a *vediḥa*; the liquid contained in the vessel is apparently being used to lustrate the tree.<sup>133</sup> From the arrangement of figures around the tree, it may be surmised that the entourage has stopped to honor the tree and that the tree is not incidental to the subject matter. Indeed, since the tree occupies the central posi-

tion in the composition—comparable to that of the *bodhi* tree and the Rāmagrāma *stūpa* in the Aśokan compositions—it may be inferred that it is a crucial element. Yet this component of the scene—the veneration of a tree—is not part of the traditional versions of the Buddha-to-be's Great Departure known to me, nor is it mentioned by Dehejia. The procession apparently then continues, with the horse being shown a third time borne by the same six figures (one of the figures on the unseen side of the horse, the most forward one, is partially visible). The entourage arrives at the site of a large pair of footprints. The horse, no longer being carried, and a small male figure (perhaps the vessel carrier?) are placed directly in front of the footprints, with the male human kneeling in veneration. Just below this scene the horse is shown again, walking rather than being carried by bearers and accompanied by members of the entourage, all of whom are turned back as if returning in the direction from which they had come. In light of the importance of the horse that I suggest below, it is notable that the human male figures at the right gesture respectfully to the horse.

Dehejia does not discuss the presence or significance of the two prominent nonfigurative motifs in the composition—the central tree and the footprints at the right, which she might claim serve as emblems. Yet I suggest that these are crucial clues to the correct interpretation of the activities in the scene, as I will discuss below.

Another important element in the composition that I have not mentioned is the umbrella, which appears five times. Dehejia asks why the artist would have “resorted to the extraordinary device of portraying a parasol hovering at an appropriate height above empty space over the horse [if the scene represents a reenactment]” (48). A careful examination of the position of the umbrella the first four times it appears suggests that it is not being held above an invisible rider at all. The first time the umbrella appears it is held in front of the horse, the second time it is held to the side of the horse (and by a woman, not a *deva*), the third time it is tilted so that it could be read as being above the head of the horse or still to the side of the horse, and the fourth time the umbrella is lowered so that it seems to preclude enough space for a rider. The fifth and final time the umbrella appears it has been placed in the ground or into a stand next to the venerated footprints. When the horse is shown for the fifth time turning back towards the palace/city, the

umbrella is not being carried along with it but has been left at the place of footprint veneration.

If one accepts my suggestion that one of the main themes of India's early Buddhist art was acts of piety (towards the Buddha especially) by devotees, such as kings like Prasenajit and Aśoka as well as other devotees, then the subject I propose for this representation may be another demonstration of this theme. My present thinking regarding this composition is that it may be intended to honor the Buddha-to-be's horse, Kaṇṭhaka, who not only carried him away from the palace at the time of the Great Departure but who had been a lifelong companion and devoted servant of the young prince from the moment of their simultaneous births. Buddhist literature talks of a “turning around place,” which the Buddha-to-be indicated was to become the Kaṇṭhakanivattana shrine (honoring the “turning around of Kaṇṭhaka”).<sup>134</sup> According to Thomas, the shrine of the Turning Back of Kaṇṭhaka was probably a real shrine that was known to the authorities upon which the Pāli commentator of the story had based his text.<sup>135</sup> The centerpiece of the composition is a tree shrine like those often used in India to mark sacred spots. The Sāñcī scene clearly seems to emphasize the horse, not the Buddha-to-be, and since an important element of the composition is that the horse turns around, the scene may reenact Kaṇṭhaka's role in the departure in order to emphasize Kaṇṭhaka's devotion and loyalty to the Buddha. The place of the footprints, which turn back toward the palace/city, may represent a commemorative spot, like that of the tree, perhaps in this case marking the place where the Buddha and the horse parted company.<sup>136</sup> That the humans accompanying the horse the final time the horse appears display gestures of respect to the animal further suggests the important role of the horse in this composition.

Because of her abiding belief that the biography of the Buddha was the primary subject of the early Buddhist art, Dehejia rejects the notion that an artistic rendering might show a re-creation of an event rather than the historical event itself. She claims that it “does a disservice to the notion of the religious devotion of the many hundreds of monks, nuns, and lay worshippers who contributed towards the decoration of the Sāñcī *stūpa* . . . to suggest that they would build the immense stone structure and then decorate it merely with pictures of a pageant! Surely it was unnecessary to depict the enactment of an event when the artist could easily circumvent that middle step and



depict the event itself" (48). But, if the celebrations themselves had special meanings—as paradigms or reminders, for example—they might have had great importance and priority. Why might a Christmas card show a group of people sitting around a Christmas tree looking happy rather than depict the birth of Christ? Because something different is being communicated—something about the celebration and not the event. If one can infer from literature as well as the living traditions of South Asia, the ceremonial and celebratory life in ancient India was extraordinarily rich, and it is possible that these activities inspired some of the subject matter in art. When Dehejia says that it was unnecessary to depict the enactment of an event when the artist could circumvent that middle step and depict the event itself, she makes a claim that can be substantiated only by proving (not merely asserting) that the life of the Buddha was more important than all other subjects and that other subjects were not even permissible because of that prioritization.

#### STŪPAS AND RELIC WORSHIP

Dehejia then embarks on a discussion of the theme of *stūpas* and their role as repositories for relics (48), a topic I also discuss in my *Art Journal* article.<sup>137</sup> She begins by saying that the "whole<sup>138</sup> purpose of going to a *stūpa* was indeed to experience the presence of the Buddha through proximity with his enshrined relic" (48). Incorrectly extrapolating from what I have said about the role of relics in Buddhism and Buddhist art, she further states that "the presence of the relic does not thereby preclude the need for stories from the life; in fact, reliving the historic life through viewing narrative sculptures recounting those events would enrich the experience of going to a *stūpa*" (48). While I agree that the presence of a relic does not preclude the inclusion of works of art portraying the life of the Buddha, neither are such life events required; while depictions of Buddha life scenes might "enrich the experience of going to a *stūpa*," so might the presence of other subjects as well. An "either/or" situation does not exist where a relic of the Buddha was enshrined.

The richness of the role of relics and their implications for Buddhist practices are not addressed by Dehejia, who selects only one aspect of relics to discuss, namely, whether the presence of a relic obviates a need for Buddha images. In particular, she does not discuss the important distinctions among the principal types of relics recognized in

Buddhism, namely, *śarīraka*, *paribhogika*, and *uddēśaka*.<sup>139</sup> Her generalized reference to relics seems to be concerned specifically with the *śarīraka* type, that is, the remains of the Buddha's physical person. A pivotal aspect of my work is my emphasis on the importance in Buddhist practice of *paribhogika* relics, which include all places the Buddha had ever been and all things he had used or touched. This second type of relic is central to my interpretation of many of the works of art at sites like Sāñcī and Bhārhut as scenes associated with pilgrimage practices. In other words, it is because *paribhogika* relics, such as the *bodhi* tree or the site of Sārnāth, have such crucial importance in Buddhist practice that I believe that they are shown in the art—they are not substitutes for preferred Buddha images but important in their own right. Further, Dehejia ignores the third type of relic, *uddēśaka*, which are images or representations of the Buddha, and the notion that, at least in some Buddhist traditions, *uddēśaka* are considered to be less important than the other two types.<sup>140</sup>

It should also be noted that the veneration of relics in Buddhism is not limited to those of Śākyamuni Buddha. Relics of other past Buddhas, of Bodhisattvas (such as the Dalai Lama, who is revered as an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara), of venerated members of the clergy, and others are also treasured and honored. Looking at the phenomenon of Buddhism in its myriad forms and in the many regions where it flourished, it is apparent that the veneration of relics is one of the most important aspects of the religion. It is manifest not only in the early Buddhist culture of India but in later traditions (such as that of the Pāla dynasty of eastern India, with its emphasis on the *paribhogika* sites of the eight major life events of the Buddha), in the Bactro-Gandhāra region, in Myanmar (Burma), in Thailand, in Sri Lanka, in China, in Mongolia, in Nepal, and in Tibet.<sup>141</sup> Relics and their veneration provide a vitally important focus in the religion, and much of the art and architecture must be understood in light of this truth.<sup>142</sup>

#### ANICONISM AND THE DEPICTION OF JĀTAKAS

Using the same line of reasoning—that the presence of a relic does not obviate the need for representations of the Buddha's life events—Dehejia turns to the subject of *jātakas* in early Buddhist art. She says: "Equally, it is not valid to assume that the prevailing religion during this early period emphasized the perfection of virtues

narrated in the *jātakas*, thereby obviating the need for life scenes" (48).<sup>143</sup>

However, it is incorrect to presume that I would claim that *jātakas* were a substitute for Buddha life scenes, thereby setting up an "either/or" situation. In fact, my view is quite the opposite. Instead, it is previous scholars attempting to understand early Buddhist art in light of the prevailing aniconic theory who have viewed *jātakas* as surrogates selected because the presumed primary subject matter—scenes from the life of the Buddha showing him in human form—was assumed to be forbidden. I contend that the *jātakas* convey a series of important Buddhological messages in their own right, particularly since the literary conventions used for *jātakas* emphasize their didactic importance rather than their role solely as sources of biographical information for the Buddha. While on a literal level they might be seen as biographical, on a didactic level they are paradigms of the Buddhist pilgrim's progress toward an enlightened state. Each *jātaka* consists of three sections: the first is the explanation of the catalyst that causes the Buddha to tell that particular story as a related lesson; the second is the story itself; and the third and final section is the meaning or lesson of the story. Western scholars have traditionally emphasized the middle of the three, that is, the narrative, and, when interpreting *jātakas* on art monuments, have considered their tasks fulfilled when they have identified the main actors in the scene and recounted the events of the story. But I believe that, Buddhologically, it is the underlying lesson that is most important. Thus, the *jātakas*, along with scenes of Buddhist piety, the devotional scenes at Buddhist sacred sites, and other subjects, served to deliver the communicative messages of the monuments. They are not substitutes for biographical scenes of the Buddha's life, and, therefore, Dehejia has inverted the point. Further, her reluctance to accept an emphasis on the perfection of virtues in the "prevailing religion" almost argues against the importance of one of the central goals of the Buddhist religion itself—the spiritual perfection of the individual (48). As paradigms of the Bodhisattva's perfections mastered during his many lifetimes, the *jātakas* are among Buddhism's most poignant reminders of the ultimate pursuit of the religion.

The apparent theme of Dehejia's paragraph, which began with a discussion of *stūpas* as repositories for relics and then turned to the issue of the role of *jātakas*, becomes clear at the end when

she states: "The proposition that the early art of India<sup>144</sup> was not primarily concerned with the biography of the Buddha is difficult to sustain" (48).<sup>145</sup> Yet Dehejia does not demonstrate this either in her discussion of relics and *jātakas* or in the course of her article. My research suggests that there are many cases that, while usually seen as representing life scenes of the Buddha, are depictions of something else altogether. The scene from Bhārhut showing King Prasenajit at a temple with an enshrined wheel (fig. 19), I have argued, represents a story about King Prasenajit, not an event in the life of the Buddha. Likewise, the two Aśokan compositions are not biographical scenes of the Buddha, the *jātakas* are not scenes of the Buddha's last life, and I suggest that there are many other compositions among the corpus of early Buddhist art that are not depictions of life events of the Buddha. That Dehejia confuses this issue is clearly demonstrated when she precedes her discussion of the two reliefs about King Aśoka with the statement that: "It is difficult to sustain the argument that early Buddhist artists and patrons were not primarily concerned with the biography of the Buddha" (56–57).<sup>146</sup> She then follows that sentence with examples of two sculptures that portray the life of Aśoka, not the Buddha. By discussing the two Aśokan examples, she is inadvertently supporting my viewpoint—that the early Buddhist art of India is *not* solely concerned with the biography of the Buddha. If Dehejia is implying that Aśoka's visits to the sites of Bodhi Gayā and Rāmagrāma are part of Buddha's biography, not the story of Aśoka, then I cannot agree. Certainly, Aśoka visited these places because of the Buddha and his devotion to the Buddha, but that is not the same as saying that his visits at sacred sites or scenes showing these visits are demonstrations of the life of the Buddha. She continues this theme by stating that "On the contrary, scenes from the Buddha biography took pride of place in the decorative scheme of the first extensively decorated *stūpa* at Bhārhut" (48)<sup>147</sup> and then enumerates where and how many such scenes she identifies on the Bhārhut monument. However, if her evidence that these are life scenes is no stronger than that which she presents in her article, then I propose that her numbers are likely to be inaccurate.

#### TIME AND PLACE

Without clarifying where the idea of "time and place" was introduced and how it applies to the



early Buddhist art of India, Dehejia addresses (52) the following proposal I have made about some reliefs:<sup>148</sup> "Two observations may be made about reliefs that actually portray Buddha's life events: (1) the *place* being shown is the place where the event occurred, and (2) the *time* of the activity depicted in the composition is the time of the event itself. These two conditions generally are not present or even implicit in reliefs of the 'aniconic' type."<sup>149</sup> In response to this idea, Dehejia states that "*ārtha* proponents"<sup>150</sup> maintain that these elements [time and place] are always explicitly indicated in iconic life scenes but generally absent in aniconic renderings, which are hence, presumably, to be understood as sacred sites" (52).<sup>151</sup> She tries to prove the incorrectness of my position by showing an "aniconic" scene in which she sees references to time and place. With regard to a relief at Sāñcī she states: "If place and time are key clues indicating a life scene, both elements occur in the aniconic portrayal at Sāñchi" (53).

My intention was not to claim that time and place are not indicated in the "aniconic" scenes but rather that the time of the activity of the scene is not the time of the Buddha life event and that the sacred site being shown may not be one where a Buddha life event occurred. Thus, I have suggested that, while a scene like King Prasenajit's visit to a shrine (fig. 19) may take place at the very site where a Buddha life event occurred, the time at which King Prasenajit's visit occurs is not the time of the Buddha life event but simply the time at which the king made the visit. Further, since there are many sacred sites throughout the Buddhist world that are revered even though the Buddha may never have visited them, some compositions may be depictions of such places. Dehejia's own suggestion that the two scenes from Amarāvati that she illustrates (her figs. 20 and 21) show local sacred sites, not places associated with Buddha life events, seems to argue for my case. What I intended to communicate in my statement was that, unless a scene is clearly a Buddha life event, one cannot presume that the place or the time being depicted have any reference at all to the Buddha or one of his life events.

#### SUMMATION REGARDING DEHEJIA'S ARTICLE AND THE THEORY OF ANICONISM

In the foregoing, I have attempted to clarify some of the points that Dehejia raises in response to ideas I have presented about the problem of aniconism as a general theory for the interpretation of early Buddhist art. It is clear that many of

the objections and counterarguments she presents arise from her misunderstanding of my work and incorrect extrapolations based on statements I have made. The problem is further exacerbated by the fact that she bases her argument in part on what she anticipates I will say in my forthcoming book. Because the topics that she draws from my work are not clearly associated with her main theme of multivalency, it is not always evident how they relate to her general effort to reinterpret the art. For example, her discussion of *jātakas* is directly aimed at statements I have made but does not address the problem of relating this type of scene to her multivalency theory. The reader is left to wonder how the *jātakas*, an important narrative subject on the early monuments, can be reconciled with her theory since they do not seem to be multivalent and do not use emblems. The fact that Dehejia does not use a systematic and comprehensive approach to critiquing my ideas, but rather selects only a few themes, creates problems in clarity for the reader, misrepresents my work, and undermines the presentation of her own multivalency theory.

#### *Dehejia's Conclusion*

In her conclusion, Dehejia claims that while Alfred Foucher "misstated the nature and extent of aniconism, he was certainly accurate in perceiving its existence" (64). In the first part of this quote, she makes precisely my point: I believe that Foucher (and others who have espoused the aniconic theory) have misstated the nature and extent of aniconism. Whether he was accurate in perceiving its existence is still to be determined. But as I have said already in publication, even if a few aniconic images do exist, the probability that the majority of representations from this corpus are not aniconic means that the theory of aniconism cannot be used as a universal explanation of the art of the period. Dehejia continues the first paragraph of her conclusion by making statements that agree with points I have made and that undermine the evidence for the aniconic theory: 1) what is now known to be the lack of correlation between the old Hīnayāna/Mahāyāna model and aniconism and 2) the existence of numerous "site scenes" among the repertoire of early Buddhist art. With slight changes, I could have written this paragraph myself.

Dehejia's final paragraph addresses her theme

of multivalency. She states: "One must accept the multilayered significance of many early bas reliefs and recognize that more than one meaning may have been intended by the artist, as well as read by the ancient beholder" (64). She notes that twentieth-century viewers might find it strange that a composition showing the Buddha's enlightenment might include a shrine erected after the event, and that they might find it anachronistic that a panel showing Aśoka's visit to Bodh Gayā would include a shrine built only after his visit. "Yet," she concludes as her final sentence, "artists and devotees of the first century B.C. probably viewed such a scene as a perfectly reasonable way to present a reminder of both the sacred site at Bodh Gayā and an event in the life of the Buddha or of King Aśoka" (64).<sup>152</sup> The interpretations I have offered regarding these two scenes (figs. 4 and 11) suggest that the choice of these two examples is unfortunate as an argument for Dehejia's position.

### *Position Statement and Conclusions*

Readers of this pair of articles by Dehejia and me are probably well aware of the history of the aniconic theory, its pivotal role in the interpretation of the early Buddhist art of India, and my challenge of the theory's validity as an overarching explanation for the subject matter of early Buddhist art. The position that Dehejia takes is that aniconism is still a viable theory for the interpretation of early Buddhist art, although she agrees, following my work, that it has been too widely applied. Nonetheless, our positions diverge in that, as I infer from her article, she claims that aniconism should still be considered a dominant aspect, while I propose that aniconism is not a satisfactory general theory by which to interpret the art and may not even be applicable to more than a small fraction of the early Buddhist art. With the recent invalidation of the external justification for the practice of aniconism in art, I believe that it is imperative that the theory be reexamined. The now-recognized fallaciousness of the long-held Hīnayāna/Mahāyāna model and the acknowledgment that Hīnayānists used images of Buddhas force scholars along new paths of inquiry.<sup>153</sup> If it can be determined that "aniconism"<sup>154</sup> does not exist in the art, then new explanations must be found to interpret the art. Or, if the art is found to contain representations that must truly be characterized as "aniconic," then new explanations—for example, Buddholog-

ical, social, cultural, or artistic—must be discovered to provide a rationale for this practice. Further, because "aniconism" might be only one of many other themes in the early Buddhist art of India, its role in the communicative message of the art must be correlated with the many other subjects depicted in the surviving art.

One of the areas of strongest disagreement between Dehejia and me relates to the underlying meanings and the communicative message of early Buddhist art. While she retains the traditional belief that early Buddhist art was primarily concerned with the historical Buddha Śākyamuni and the events of his life, I believe that a different message, or perhaps several different messages, comprise the more likely content of the art.<sup>155</sup> Looking at the artistic compositions not only as individual entities but also as components of an overall message or series of messages, I suggest that the artists and patrons responsible for the art were reinforcing a number of important didactic, spiritual, religious, and social themes within Buddhist culture. These themes might include the idea of generosity (exemplified by Anāthapiṇḍada's gift of the Jetavana grove); religious piety by lay persons (as seen in the many illustrations of lay devotions at sacred sites); the belief that all sentient beings, not only humans, are moving along the religious path (exemplified by the worship of the Rāmagrāma relics by the *nāgas*, the Bhārhut reliefs showing the *devas* and *apsarasas*, and the many scenes showing devotional activities by elephants, monkeys, and other animals); conversion and reform (exemplified by the inclusion of the story of Ajātaśatru); paradigmatic Buddhist kingship (exemplified by illustrations of life events of individuals like Aśoka and Prasenajit); and the perfection of moral and spiritual qualities (exemplified by the popular inclusion of *jātaka* stories on the early monuments). While I would never suggest that Śākyamuni Buddha did not play a vitally important function in early Buddhism as a role model and in other capacities, I suggest that the religious message of the art also included a range of instructional and soteriological/methodological models addressed to the ordinary being. (And here, when I refer to the "ordinary being," I do not want to be misconstrued as referring specifically to a lay person. Rather, I mean "ordinary" in the sense of the vast majority of living creatures, including animals as well as people, who, according to the tenets of Buddhism, are still struggling to develop their spiritual qualities.)

Dehejia's abiding belief in the symbolic and



emblematic role played by nonfigurative motifs and subjects in the art has not been supported through either internal evidence within the artistic compositions or by external documentation. I suggest that the expectation—not the actuality—that these elements play a symbolic role is an important reason why the idea persists in the interpretation of early Buddhist art. This is not to say that there are no symbols and emblems in early Buddhist art, for clearly there are many. The very pillars, *cakras*, and some of the other motifs discussed by Dehejia can serve as emblems, but this is not, I suggest, their principal role when they are depicted in many of the narrative scenes on monuments such as the *stūpas* at Sāñcī and Bhārhut.<sup>156</sup>

By selecting out certain themes I raised in my publications, Dehejia does not convey the cohesiveness of the work that I have published thus far—mainly visible in the *Art Journal* article. Although she addresses a number of points that I make in my *Art Journal* article and the *Art of Ancient India*, as enumerated in the section on “Dehejia and the Theory of Aniconism” above, she removes ideas from their contexts and fails to undertake a systematic critique of my work. The most reasonable solution(s) to the aniconic problem must take into account the strengths and weaknesses of both the traditional theory and any new ideas that are presented. Yet her arguments ignore the substantial evidence I have presented about a number of important issues. I invite the interested reader to consult my “Early Buddhist Art” article, and particularly my discussions of the following issues: *śaṭṛaka*, *paribhogika*, and *uddēśaka* relics and the related questions about the prioritization of relics versus images; Sri Lankan Buddhist practices relating to the sixteen sacred sites, which, I believe, are reflective of and strongly related to some of the practices and religious concerns revealed in early Buddhist art; the role of pilgrimage in early Buddhist religious practice; the problems of varied interpretations of the Bhārhut inscriptions; the evidence of inscribed reliefs, such as those from Bhārhut, showing and labeling the *bodhi* trees of some of the former Buddhas; the certainty from archaeological evidence that Buddha images were being produced (and have survived from) the very period of production of the so-called aniconic works of art; and, finally, the crucial issue of historiography and how it relates to the theory of aniconism.

While Dehejia and I agree that there are some works that are, or, in my opinion, might be,

aniconic, and that there are some works that clearly are not, we differ vigorously in our respective analyses of specific works of art. Some of this difference in interpretation may arise from what may be our respective propensities for wishing to claim one or another individual specimen for the aniconic or non-aniconic camp. But some of this difference must also be seen as reflecting a transitional point in our knowledge about early Buddhism and its art, when many of the old presuppositions have been stripped away but new generalizations are not yet in place. I suggest that Dehejia’s multivalency theory represents an admirable attempt to reconcile the seeming invincibility of the institutionalized aniconic theory with the flaws and weaknesses that theory embodies, some of which I have recently addressed. I suggest that Dehejia’s view represents a midway point in a transition that evinces a reluctance to abandon the old while recognizing the validity of the new. Dehejia has essentially proposed a compromise position in which elements of the old theory that still seem to make sense are reconciled with new information that changes the direction of earlier thinking on the subject.

I believe that scholars of Indic art should continue to move forward on the issue of aniconism and seek a new generalization or series of generalizations that accommodate the importance of a variety of themes evident in the art, including but not limited to what I have identified as scenes of pilgrimage and lay devotion (which Dehejia has dubbed the “site” scenes). The new generalizations should be consistent with the patterns of belief and practice of the Buddhism of the corresponding period, as documented by texts, inscriptions, and other sources. Further, the new generalization(s) must move beyond consideration of individual compositions and consider their potential role in a larger context of a series of images or even an entire monument. As I have tried to demonstrate in this article, I do not believe that the multivalency theory offered by Dehejia fulfills these criteria. Whether my own work will help move scholarship further along the path to these goals, of course, remains to be seen.<sup>157</sup>

### *A Closing Thought*

Although it is unlikely that any individual can be completely unfettered by the values and concerns of his or her own culture, scholars today

have become aware of the ways in which our personal vantage points bias our interpretations of other contemporary cultures and those of the past. Concomitantly, scholars in the humanistic and social science disciplines recognize the need to understand other cultures in their own right, rather than according to the standards and criteria of the observer. While recognizing the desirability of this ideal does not necessarily liberate us from lapses in objectivity, this awareness at least helps us to confront some of the biases that color our interpretations.

In the historiographic portions of my forthcoming book, I plan to suggest—as I did in the paper I presented at the 1991 conference of the American Committee for South Asian Art—that the origination, perpetuation, and passionate advocacy of the aniconic theory is deeply embedded within a matrix of Western cultural viewpoints that were transferred to, or perhaps imposed upon, the Indic situation. I will suggest, for example, that nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writers may have been predisposed by their knowledge of the Judaeo-Christian-Islamic heritage, with its recurring disputations over whether to represent God in the art, to puzzle over the apparent avoidance of Buddha images in early Buddhist art. At the same time that the religious heritage of Western scholars may have colored their interpretations of ancient Indic culture, the political relationships between the Asian and European worlds must have played a significant role in the formulation of their ideas, causing Western imperialist viewpoints also to affect the ways in which European scholars per-

ceived early Buddhist art. Alfred Foucher, for example, explains the apparent absence of early Buddha images by claiming that the Indians were not clever enough to think of the idea of an image themselves; he credits the Western (Greco-Roman) culture of the Indic northwest for what he considered to be this superior innovation.<sup>158</sup> Such views have influenced the study of early Buddhist art for more than a century.

Two terms from the discipline of linguistics that have now become current among disciplines involved in crosscultural studies seem pertinent here, and, I believe, should be at the forefront of every scholar's mind as he or she embarks upon a study of the past.<sup>159</sup> The first term, *etic*, is defined as "of, relating to, or involving description of linguistic or behavioral phenomena considered in isolation from a particular system or in relation to predetermined general concepts."<sup>160</sup> The second and opposing term, *emic*, is defined as "of, relating to, or involving analysis of linguistic or behavioral phenomena in terms of the internal structural or functional elements of a particular system."<sup>161</sup> I suggest that the study of early Buddhist art has been dominated by an etic approach for more than a century, in which a predetermined, general concept—namely, the theory of aniconism—has influenced the way in which the art has been interpreted. It is time, I propose, that we examine the art for what is there and look beyond the expectations that may have their origin largely in the imaginations of those who encounter and interpret, but did not create, the art.



## Notes

I am grateful to Frederick M. Asher, Nancy E. Eder, John C. Huntington, Miranda Shaw, and especially Janice M. Glowski for reading drafts of this manuscript and for their advice and help throughout the writing process.

1. Vidya Dehejia, "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems," *Ars Orientalis* 21 (1991): 45–66 (subsequent page references given parenthetically in the text).
2. Dehejia defends her discussion of my work at this stage on the basis that the ideas have been presented in a volume that has "entered the textbook repertoire" (65 n. 4). She refers to my *Art of Ancient India*. See Susan L. Huntington, with contributions by John C. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India* (New York and Tokyo: John Weatherhill, Inc., 1985). I do not understand this rationale, particularly since the ideas are offered in that book as tentative new interpretations. Further, in my article "Early Buddhist Art and the Theory of Aniconism," *Art Journal* 49, no. 4 (Winter 1990): 401–8, I explain that I will present the full range of my research in a forthcoming book on the early Buddhist art of India.
3. See S. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 408 n. 43, in which I state: "At this time, I am unable to predict whether there are indeed some images that require a Buddha figure and must be seen as truly 'aniconic' in the sense that they employ a symbol as a substitute for what should be an anthropomorphic representation. However, even if a few images are truly aniconic, the vast majority are not, and the role of 'aniconism' has been vastly overemphasized, ultimately leading to the misinterpretation of most of the extant art." The definition of aniconic that I used in the *Art Journal* article, that the Buddha might be referred to by symbols, is expanded in the present article to include depictions that may refer to him through his absence. See below.
4. S. Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, 70–71, 72–73, 87, 98–99, 100.
5. I am certain that Dehejia was in the audience for the 1988 paper, since she chaired the session in which it was presented and led the ensuing discussion. I do not know whether she was in the audience for the 1991 presentation.
6. Although my husband, John C. Huntington, has not been working on the "aniconic problem" *per se*, he has incorporated some of my ideas into his work and has published a number of articles that are pertinent to the topic, some of which are referred to by Dehejia. I include mention of John C. Huntington's work here since Dehejia seems to conflate us and our work, as when she refers to my work and then says, "For further understanding of *their* argument" (65 n. 4; italics mine). For the most relevant publications by John C. Huntington see his "The Origin of the Buddha Image: Early Image Traditions and the Concept of Buddhadarśana-punyā," in *Studies in Buddhist Art of South Asia*, ed. A. K. Narain (New Delhi: Kanak, 1985): 23–58. He later published a Chinese dated Buddha image that he discussed in that article: John C. Huntington, "A Note on a Buddha Image from China dated to the year 36 of the Pre-Christian Era (former Han Chien Chao third year)," *Lalit Kalā* 22 (1985): 27–31 but retracted it since the piece was found to be a forgery. See his letter to the editor in *Lalit Kalā* 23 (1988): 44–45. Although this piece has been shown to be a forgery, the discovery regarding its authenticity does not alter the basic premise of his work or negate the other strong evidence that he presents. See also John C. Huntington, "Sowing the Seeds of the Lotus: A Journey to the Great Pilgrimage Sites of Buddhism," pt. 1 [Lumbinī and Bodhgayā], *Orientalism* 16, no. 11 (Nov. 1985): 46–61; pt. 2 [Rṣipatana Mṛgadāva], *Orientalism* 17, no. 2 (Feb. 1986): 28–43; pt. 3 [Śrāvastī and Sānikāśya], *Orientalism* 17, no. 3 (March 1986): 32–46; pt. 4, *Orientalism* 17, no. 7 (July 1986): 28–40; pt. 5 [Kūśinagara, Appendices, and Notes], *Orientalism* 17, no. 9 (Sept. 1986): 46–58.
7. S. Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, 642 n. 18.
8. The paper is being published in a volume of conference papers by the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam that is being edited by Pauline Lunsinghe Scheurleer.
9. John C. Huntington, "Pilgrimage as Image: The Cult of the Aṣṭamahāprātihārya," pt. 1, *Orientalism* 18, no. 4 (April 1987): 63.
10. Dehejia does not seek religious, philosophical, social, and political explanations for what she perceives to be multivalency in the art but relies purely on a literary analogy. I suggest that these avenues of investigation might be equally, if not more, important in attempting to understand multivalency in the art.
11. There are strict rules for determining where and how to break the words in Sanskrit, but, in spite of the rigidity of the rules, significant play and ambiguity is possible.
12. The term *pun* often suggests a humorous double meaning in the English context. I use it here

- without any implication that humor is intended. Chinese and Sanskrit are particularly well suited to punning. While in contemporary American English punning is often derided as a low form of humor, in other languages, such as Chinese and Sanskrit, it is a highly respected literary technique.
13. In many languages, multiple meanings can also be implied by using homonyms, such as *dear* and *deer*.
  14. Here Dehejia says: "Equally, a relief may be read both as an event in the life of the Buddha and as the holy site at which that event occurred."
  15. Dehejia credits the artist with the choice of subject matter (57 and *passim*). However, in ancient India the situation was not so clearcut; it is likely that patrons as well as members of the clergy played significant roles in the selection of artistic subject matter.
  16. For example, see S. Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, 642 n. 18.
  17. See Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, *Leaves from the Bodhi Tree* (Dayton and Seattle: Dayton Art Institute and the University of Washington Press, 1990), 104–5. Because the metaphor occurs on imperial copperplates issued by the Pāla kings themselves, the comparison is especially compelling, leaving little doubt that the kings themselves were aware of the analogy. While the metaphor is given expression through its literary form in the copperplates and visually in the image type, it represents far more than a mere literary or artistic phenomenon. Rather, revealing as it does the views the Pāla kings held about their political power and probably their attempt to legitimize their rule through the authority of the prevailing Buddhist culture, the analogy is deeply embedded within the Pāla cultural sphere and can only be fully understood as such.
  18. Although I use the term *emblem* in some of my writings, I do not use the term in the same situations as Dehejia. While I do believe that there are emblems (and symbols) in Buddhist art (see my "Position Statement and Conclusion" section), I do not agree that the motifs in the compositions she discusses are used emblematically.
  19. Although Dehejia does not use the term *nonfigural* or *nonfigurative* in her definition of an emblem, she uses the term *nonfigural* several times in her text, making it clear that she refers specifically to nonfigurative motifs. See, for example, her emphasis on the nonfigural aspect of the Buddhist wheel (47). The assumed correlation between being nonfigurative and being emblematic is a cornerstone of traditional aniconic thinking.
  20. She uses the mango tree as one example (45).
  21. For my discussion of Dehejia's phrase "attribute of the faith," see section entitled "The Emblems of the Tree, the Pillar, and the *Stūpa* as an Attribute [of the Faith]." See also n. 27.
  22. Corresponding figure numbers for Dehejia's article are cited in the captions so that the reader can correlate our two articles. I am grateful to Vidya Dehejia for supplying photographs of all the works of art published in this article except for figs. 6, 7, and 12, which are by John C. Huntington.
  23. Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (first ed., 1899; Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1960), 919.
  24. See Eugene Watson Burlingame, *Buddhist Legends, Translated from the Original Pali Text of the Dhammapadam Commentary* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1921; rpt. ed., London: Luzac and Co. for the Pali Text Society, 1969), pt. 3 [books 13–26], 56–60, for the story. On p. 59, the text specifically names the tree as a *śiṛṣa* tree and states that the Buddha sat beneath the tree.
  25. It is impossible for me to foreshadow many of the conclusions I will reach in my completed book.
  26. Dehejia herself mentions the empty space above the horse (48, lines 10–11). Rather than recognizing the contradiction the empty space creates for her theory of emblematic representations, she presents the idea of the empty space to argue against my pageantry interpretation.
  27. I have added "of the faith" since when Dehejia first discusses this concept (45), she includes the phrase. The term *faith* seems antiquated as a description of the complex social, cultural, soteriological, and other aspects of the Buddhist religious complex.
  28. Helmuth von Glasenapp, *Buddhism—A Non-theistic Religion*, trans. from German by Irmgard Schloegl (New York: George Braziller, 1966).
  29. Her claim that the artist added the label may be debatable; it is unknown whether the artists were also the scribes. Regarding the term *vamdate*, which Dehejia translates as "bows," see n. 23 and the corresponding text.
  30. S. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 403–4. Dehejia does not state her indebtedness to my work.
  31. S. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 403, 408 nn.



- 20, 21. Dehejia vastly oversimplifies the problems relating to the terms *bodho* and *bodhi* (65–66 n. 20). The issue is discussed in my forthcoming book. Also see Heinrich Lüders, ed., *Bharhut Inscriptions*, rev. and supplemented by Ernst Waldschmidt and Madhukar Anant Mehendale, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, vol. 2, pt. 2 (Ootacamund: Government Epigraphist for India, 1963), 94–96.
32. See also Lüders, *Bharhut Inscriptions*, 97–100.
33. Actually, Dehejia's statement is contradictory. She says that the gods came to praise the enlightened Buddha, implying that he was already enlightened, and that the event occurred simultaneously with the enlightenment. Dehejia cites Rajendralala Mitra, *The Lalitavistara* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1877), 457 (end of ch. 22 and beginning of ch. 23) as the source of her information.
34. Gwendolyn Bays, trans., *The Voice of the Buddha: The Beauty of Compassion*, 2 vols. (Berkeley, Calif.: Dharma, 1983), 2:499ff.
35. J. J. Jones, trans., *The Mahāvastu*, 3 vols. (London: Luzac and Co., 1949–56), 2:318.
36. The discrepancies between textual accounts remain to be worked out in relation to this scene.
37. The *Lalitavistara* enumerates sixteen ways in which the gods of Śuddhāvāsā "spoke words to weaken Māra," and sixteen ways in which other gods attempted the same. See Bays, *The Voice of the Buddha*, 2:499–502.
38. She does not clarify whether the figures arrive before or after the enlightenment.
39. Dehejia states: "Since early Buddhist inscriptions [does she mean all early Buddhist inscriptions or only those at Bhārhut?] are so easily readable, I have used my own translations to avoid burdening the text unduly with footnotes [*sic* for endnotes]. In the single instance where variant readings are possible, a note has been added" (65 n. 9). Although Dehejia claims that she has translated all of the inscriptions herself, her wording in the case cited here is curiously like that of Lüders, *Bharhut Inscriptions*, 100, no. B27. In particular, since Lüders infers the word *mimic* from the sculpture and an understanding of particular dance forms although the term is not directly used in the inscription, it is strange that Dehejia includes the term *mimic* in what she implies is her own literal translation. See Lüders, *Bharhut Inscriptions*, 101, for his reasoning regarding the dance. Dehejia's statement that a variant reading is possible only in one instance [of the Bhārhut inscriptions?] oversimplifies the case.
- First, there are discrepancies among authors regarding the accurate transliteration from the ancient script; second, while the gist of the inscriptions might be easily discerned, there are points of grammar that can be disputed and that have relevance to the meanings of the inscriptions.
40. S. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 404.
41. Although Dehejia does not specify whom she refers to with the words "Those who deny the existence of aniconism," I assume she is referring to my work. However, as I have explained above, I have not denied the existence of aniconism but only proposed that aniconism is not an all-inclusive explanation for the art. Throughout Dehejia's article, it is clear that she has confused these two issues.
42. She does not specify how she is able to predict what another individual might say.
43. But it might not; see n. 46.
44. S. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 404.
45. In spite of this similarity, "aniconic" phases for Hinduism and Jainism have never been proposed.
46. Conversely, the presence of Indra and Brahmā is not proof that the scene represents the Buddha life event, if the writings of the seventh-century Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang can be trusted. Xuanzang records that the early Buddhist kings had constructed ladders at the site of the descent. Atop the ladders, they built a *vihāra* to house a stone image of a Buddha, and flanking the ladders (apparently near the bottom) were figures of Indra and Brahmā. The relevant passage of text is cited in S. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 404. See also Samuel Beal, trans., *Si-yu-ki. Buddhist Records of the Western World. Translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang (A.D. 629)*, 2 vols. (London: Trubner and Co., 1884; rpt., Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1969), 1:203. Therefore, it is possible that some representations that include depictions of Indra and Brahmā might show the sacred site, not the Buddha life event. In the case of fig. 5, because the scene contains a figure that is likely to represent the nun Utpalā (Utpalavarṇā), who, according to some sources including Xuanzang, greeted the Buddha on his descent, the composition may show the life event. However, something puzzles me about this particular composition, which I have never seen or examined in person. From the photograph kindly supplied by Martha Carter, it appears as if an upper register might have been broken off, in which case a representation of a Buddha at the top of the ladder may

have been originally included. Such a composition would correlate with Xuanzang's description of the monument that had been erected at the site, which included a *vihāra* with a Buddha image at the top. Thus, it is possible that this would not be an "aniconic" representation of a Buddha life scene but a damaged piece that had originally included a Buddha figure. In other words, I see at least three possible interpretations of this sculpture: it could depict a Buddha life event without a representation of the Buddha, which would make it an "aniconic" scene; it could be an "iconic" representation of a Buddha life scene with the Buddha figure now missing; or it could be a representation of the sacred site with the figures of Indra and Brahmā intended to be images that had been installed at the site (possibly, with a now-lost Buddha image at the top). In the latter case, the kneeling figure would need explanation. The argument that images of the Buddha, Indra, and Brahmā had been installed at the sacred site may not affect the interpretation I have offered regarding the Bhārhut composition. The textual account that refers to the image mentions all three; if representations of Indra and Brahmā were shown, but not the Buddha, then this might be evidence for "aniconism." If none of the figures are depicted, as in the Bhārhut example, this might only indicate the existence of alternative traditions or that the statues and ladders reported by Xuanzang in the seventh century might not have existed as early as the date of the Bhārhut carving.

context. I did not know this at the time I wrote *Art of Ancient India* but corrected the terminology in my *Art Journal* article.

47. She refers to John C. Huntington, "Pilgrimage as Image," pt. 1, 56.
48. It is unclear whether by "earlier" Dehejia is referring to the earlier (that is, pre-Kuṣāṇa) artistic tradition that preceded the creation of this carving or to a practice of homage to a wheel-topped pillar that existed prior to the lifetime of the Buddha. In other words, it is not clear whether her use of the term *earlier* refers to the date of the carving or to the history of the subject matter it portrays.
49. This situation might, therefore, be parallel to the case of the Prasenajit scene that Dehejia discusses (fig. 19), where she argues for this viewpoint. See my discussion below.
50. Dehejia does not specify whether she is the first to coin this phrase or whether the idea has been proposed by an earlier author.
51. Though not acknowledged by Dehejia, this section is heavily dependent upon my work. See S. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art."
52. The term *pīṭha* is more appropriate in the Buddhist

53. Rather than saying that the *bodhi* tree represents Bodh Gayā, or the wheel-crowned pillar represents Sārnāth, I would say that these motifs are key identifying elements in compositions in which sacred sites are depicted.
54. In spite of my general concurrence regarding the subject matter, I feel that Dehejia overstates the case when she appeals to universal agreement as a source of authority for the identification of these scenes. For example, of her fig. 14 (my fig. 11) Dehejia says that "There is universal agreement that" (57) and with regard to the second scene, which she does not illustrate, she says: "The second Aśokan episode . . . as everyone agrees" (57). Even if it could be ascertained that "everyone agrees" about the identification of these scenes, "everyone" could still be wrong. The correctness of an interpretation does not depend upon how many people agree with it or the assertiveness with which it is stated.
55. Other than those that are, of course, inherent in the tree itself.
56. John S. Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka: A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna* [hereafter *Aśokāvadāna*] (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 266.
57. Strong, *Aśokāvadāna*, 250.
58. It is not clear whether the term *caitya* refers specifically to the type of building we commonly call a *caitya* (i.e., a *caitya* hall).
59. Strong suggests that the statement that the tree returned to its normal state in the Quinquennial story might be an interpolation from the Tiṣyarakṣitā story. See Strong, *Aśokāvadāna*, 266 n. 48. But this cannot explain Dehejia's confusion since the *Aśokāvadāna* is very clear regarding which incident is being described. In the Tiṣyarakṣitā story, Aśoka's Queen Tiṣyarakṣitā becomes jealous of "*bodhi*," whom she mistakes for another woman that she assumes Aśoka loves. Wishing to destroy "*bodhi*," Tiṣyarakṣitā asks another woman to put a thread on the tree to cause it to wither. When the queen learns that *bodhi* is not another woman, she regrets what she has done and requests that the thread be removed. The woman who had assisted the queen previously carried out this newer instruction and also watered the tree with a thousand pitchers of milk a day until the tree was restored. See Strong, *Aśokāvadāna*, 257–



58. According to this version of the *Ṭiṣyarakṣitā* story, the tree was lustrated by the woman who had caused the tree to wither, and, therefore, the *Sāñcī* relief, which shows *Aśoka*, not a woman, could not be the same. Based on the *Aśokāvadāna*, the *Sāñcī* relief is more likely to represent the Quinquennial Festival.
60. See Alfred Foucher's writings in John Marshall and Alfred Foucher, *The Monuments of Sāñchī*, 3 vols. (Calcutta: Manager of Publications, 1940; rpt., Delhi: Swati Publications, 1982), 1:212.
61. The inscription on the *stūpa* depicted in the center of the relief does not identify the subject of the composition but is dedicative in nature. It reads: "*Āya-Cuḍasa dhamakathikasa atevāsino Balamitrassa dānam*" (The gift of Balamitra, a pupil of the Preacher of the Law *Āya-Cuḍa* [*Ārya-Cūḍa* or *Ārya Kshudra*]). See Marshall and Foucher, *The Monuments of Sāñchī*, 1:342, inscr. 399; vol. 3, pl. 134.
62. Strong, *Aśokāvadāna*, 111–12.
63. This does not mean that there is no richness of meanings or layers of meanings or metaphoric meanings but rather that there is no direct and overt use of symbols or emblems as equivalents of something else in this context. Further, I do not intend to imply that there is not a "higher" or paradigmatic meaning.
64. This theme and others that I mention briefly in this article will be developed and substantiated in my forthcoming book. I mention them here not with the idea of offering my proof but to enable the reader to understand the different direction my work takes from previous interpretations of the artistic remains.
65. Strong, *Aśokāvadāna*, 113. Strong also suggests that the *Rāmagrāma* story demonstrates *Aśoka*'s imperfection since he was unable to obtain the relics from the *nāgas*, therefore rendering his collection of the relics incomplete (p. 113).
66. Strong, *Aśokāvadāna*, 109–10. The number 84,000 is a conventional Buddhist number. The actual number of *stūpas* constructed by *Aśoka* is unknown. This act probably also consecrated *Aśoka*'s empire with the ultimate symbols of Buddhist authority, a feat that later kings throughout the Buddhist world attempted to duplicate, though never so extensively.
67. Strong, *Aśokāvadāna*, 221 and 110, especially for the significance to *Aśoka* regarding the relics.
68. S. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 405.
69. Dehejia says that some reliefs show the *stūpa* and the pillar as memorials, but she illustrates not only a *stūpa* and a pillar but also a *bodhi* tree as examples of the type. The reader is left not knowing whether the *stūpa* and pillar are used as examples of types or whether Dehejia had neglected to list other possibilities (57–58).
70. I would modify this statement to say that these sacred objects might indeed indicate the presence of the Buddha at the site, but they are not substitutes for his physical form.
71. S. Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, 100, and fig. 6.11. Dehejia does not cite my interpretation of the relief; however, she criticizes an interpretation offered by John C. Huntington (66 n. 35).
72. S. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 407.
73. I have cited the passage in the *Mahāparinibbāna* suttanta wherein the Buddha entrusts the relics to the laity, not the clergy. S. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 408 n. 34. See also T. W. Rhys Davids, trans., "The Mahā-Parinibbāna Suttanta," in *Buddhist Suttas*, Sacred Books of the East, vol. 11 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1881; rpt., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1968), 131–36. Dehejia acknowledges the same passage (59) but states that Buddhological research shows that the clergy were also involved in relic worship. As I explain in the text, I do not argue with this evidence but refer only to what is portrayed in the art.
74. S. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 403.
75. See S. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 407.
76. A major form of documentation for the extensiveness of pilgrimage and emphasis on sacred *pīṭhas* comes from the many pilgrims' accounts and records that survive. In S. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 407, for example, I quote the famous thirteenth-century monk Dharmasvāmin's poignant account of his visit to Bodh Gayā.
77. This is a theme I discuss in detail in my book.
78. See, for example, S. Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, figs. 8.24 (one figure to each side of the lotus pedestal), 10.18, 10.19, and 12.18.
79. Dehejia is counting according to the images she reads that way; I am counting others into the group. She also does not explain whether, for

example, at Bhārhut she means there were six to eight total or six to eight in the approximately one-fourth of the monument that has survived.

80. The meaning of this portion of Dehejia's sentence is unclear to me. Does she mean "emphasis on life of the Buddha"?
81. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 405.
82. The examples that Dehejia cites in her text to support her viewpoint do not seem to lend credence to her statement. That is, Aśoka's interviews with beings at the site who had seen the Buddha during his lifetime only suggest Aśoka's desire to learn more about the Buddha but do not prove that Aśoka's pilgrimage emphasized the Buddha's physical form.
83. Strong, *Aśokāvadāna*, 244. Aśoka was not under the illusion that he would see the Buddha.
84. What does it mean to "experience the Buddha himself in all his glory"?
85. S. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 402–3. See also below regarding "time and place." Dehejia does not refer to my work regarding this image.
86. Dehejia suggests (60) that the Buddha image in the second sculpture is made of metal, but it is unclear how this can be inferred from the drawing.
87. How can the fact that a *stūpa* shows a circular medallion provide evidence that the scene represents a local site? It should also be noted that the Amarāvātī remains have not yielded medallions as separate roundels but rather that depictions of roundels appear in other sculptural compositions.
88. Because Dehejia uses the phrase "of the faith" in her text (45), I include it here. Also see n. 27 above for my comments regarding the use of the term *faith* as a description of the Buddhist religious complex.
89. She does not specify which tree, but it may be presumed that she means the *bodhi* tree here.
90. At this point in her text, she does not suggest any meanings for the *stūpa*. Because she has used the triad of the tree, the pillar, and the *stūpa* throughout her article, it is unclear whether Dehejia has deliberately avoided telling what the *stūpa* represents here or if this was just an inadvertent omission. As mentioned previously, it is also unclear whether she intended to omit the possibility of other motifs, such as the *cakra*, the throne, and the

parasol. Further, she assumes that Sārnāth and the first sermon would always be shown by a pillar, not a *cakra*, but this is not documented.

91. See S. Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, figs. 6.4 and 6.10 for illustrations. Some of the compositions on these blocks are clearly scenes of lay worship at sacred sites. See Marshall and Foucher, *The Monuments of Sāñchī*, vol. 2, pls. 26 (scene showing worship of a wheel installed on an altar); 27 (scene at top that shows worship of a pillar topped by a wheel and adorsed lion capital); and 32 (lower scene, which shows worship of a *stūpa*), to cite just a few.
92. It might represent a site in the Bactro-Gandhāra region itself. Chinese pilgrim accounts reveal that there were numerous places throughout the Bactro-Gandhāra region where visitors could revere sacred objects that were reputed to have been used by the Buddha and places he was said to have visited. See, for example, Xuanzang's account of the Gandhāra region (Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, 1:99). Some of the sacred sites are reputed to be places where the Buddha had lived during his past lives. (See, for example, Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, 1:110.)
93. She further states that there are two hundred or more dome slabs about eleven by three feet, the compositions of which were divided into three registers. During the final phase of embellishment of the *stūpa*, she claims, their design followed a standard repetitive scheme. In an endnote (n. 42) following her mention of the final phase of embellishment of the *stūpa*, she states that the earlier slabs are decorated with a variety of subjects but that the later slabs all conform to the scheme she discusses and illustrates with her fig. 24. However, it is not explained how many of the two hundred or more slabs belong to the earlier versus later phases (that is, how many slabs actually have the fig. 24 design) nor her criteria for determining which examples belong to which phase. From what I have seen of the Amarāvātī remains in the three main collections housing these materials (at the Madras Museum, the Amarāvātī Site Museum, and the British Museum), I am doubtful that there are almost two hundred nearly identical eleven-foot-high slabs, and, therefore, the impact of the design she cites is not as great as she implies.
94. Here it becomes clear that in this corpus of two hundred slabs, Dehejia is not really talking about one type but about a number of variations. The fact that Dehejia believes that the three so-called "Descent" scenes (the Swāt example, the Bhārhut relief, and the one on the Mathurā carving; figs. 5,



6, and 7) portray the same subject suggests that she may not be taking into account variations among the compositions.

95. Dehejia also claims that the precise interpretation of these slabs "is crucial to an appreciation of the Buddhist message of the site" (64). (Does she mean the message of the monument?) How can the message of the site (or monument) be determined without studying other aspects, such as the main sculptures at the four entrances of the monument, the sculptures at the gateways, identifying the relic contents of the *stūpa*, studying other structures at the site, and so on? In other words, are these images alone enough to make such a vast interpretation?
96. My assumption is that Dehejia is not attempting to make a distinction here but has simply used different wording. I infer that her intention is to suggest that the prerequisites are for the interpretation of early Buddhist art, not the emblems, and that she intended to say that the second prerequisite for the interpretation of early Buddhist art is to acknowledge the multilayered significance of the emblems.
97. Dehejia states, "There are two critical and complementary prerequisites for the accurate interpretation of early Buddhist art" (45, para. 2). The implication is that these prerequisites are applicable to all of the art. However, Dehejia's use of the term *frequently* in the description of her second prerequisite ("the artists working at the early Buddhist sites frequently seem to have intended a conflation of meanings," 45) suggests that she does not believe that the two prerequisites are requisite in every instance.
98. Dehejia's discussion is sometimes unclear as to whether she is talking about two or three levels of meaning. In her explanation of her second prerequisite, each of the possibilities she cites has only two levels of meaning (46). She introduces the Bhārhut relief showing King Prasenajit (fig. 19; her fig. 1) by saying: "Significantly, a double layer of meaning appears to inform the greater number of narrative reliefs at Bhārhut, Sānci, and other early Buddhist sites" (46). But her explanation of this panel provides three levels of meaning (47).
99. Lüders, *Bharhut Inscriptions*, 113, no. B39. Dehejia does not provide a transliteration of the inscription. Lüders translates the inscription "King Pasenaji, the Kosala," rather than "of Kosala," as given by Dehejia.
100. Lüders, *Bharhut Inscriptions*, 113, no. B38.
- Dehejia's transliteration *dhammachakod* differs from Lüders' *dhammachakam*.
101. To be accurate, there is no such thing as completely internal evidence; that is, we read into the composition things we know from the world outside the composition, for example, that the structure is a building, that the trees are trees, that the wheel is the type of Buddhist wheel we know from other experiences, and so on. What I mean by internal evidence, though, is the components that are actually in the composition and the physical properties of the object.
102. It may be inferred from literary and historical sources that the king might ride in a chariot, and, therefore, it is likely that the central figure in the chariot represents Prasenajit. Additionally, the two large figures in the hall are likely both to represent the king, who is thus shown twice as he performs his circumambulatory devotions to the wheel.
103. In light of the virtual absence of textual, inscrip-tional, literary, or other evidence in Dehejia's article, one of the most perplexing interpretations she offers is her identification of three male figures at the bottom right of the composition she illustrates as her fig. 8 as representing "three gods hovering anxiously over the weakened Buddha" (53). Because the figures are not clearly identifiable as gods, because they do not look anxious, because they do not appear to be hovering, and because there is no weakened Buddha in the scene, it is necessary that external evidence be employed to support such an identification.
104. She says that the scene shows the actual historical event in which the monarch visited the Buddha at Prasenajit's capital of Śrāvastī and listened to his sermon.
105. It is unclear to me why the idea of a nonfigural emblem is linked with emphasis on the Law. There is no inherent reason why the emphasis on the Buddha's teachings cannot be communicated through figural means as well. This may be a holdover from thinking within the aniconic framework.
106. Alexander Cunningham, *The Stūpa of Bharhut: A Buddhist Monument Ornamented with Numerous Sculptures Illustrated of Buddhist Legend and History in the Third Century B.C.* (London, 1879; rpt., Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1962), 90–91. Cunningham does not cite the textual source he used to confirm that King Prasenajit did indeed build a shrine containing a wheel at Śrāvastī. From other

information he provides, the reader may infer that he based his information on Xuanzang's seventh-century account. See Cunningham, *The Stūpa of Bharhut*, 90.

107. Although an early believer in aniconism, Cunningham was not the first to articulate the theory fully.
108. The Buddha did not meditate for six years under the *bodhi* tree. Cunningham may be confusing the period under the *bodhi* tree with the period of asceticism following the great renunciation.
109. Cunningham, *The Stūpa of Bharhut*, 90.
110. See, for example, Burlingame, *Buddhist Legends*, 363–64, for index listings; I. B. Horner, *The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings (Majjhima-Nikāya)*, 3 vols. (1954–59; rpt., London: Luzac and Co., for the Pali Text Society, 1967–70), esp. vol. 2, passim; Carolyn Rhys Davids, *The Book of the Kindred Sayings (Sanyutta-Nikāya) or Grouped Suttas*, pt. 1 (rpt. London: Luzac & Co., for the Pali Text Society, 1950), 93–127; and W. Woodville Rockhill, *The Life of the Buddha and the Early History of His Order Derived from Tibetan Works in the Bkah-hgyur and Bstan-hgyur* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1907), 111–16.
111. C. Rhys Davids, *Book of Kindred Sayings*, pt. 1, 93–96. Note that the text Rockhill used says that the Jetavana was at Rājgir. See Rockhill, *Life of the Buddha*, 49.
112. C. Rhys Davids, *Book of Kindred Sayings*, pt. 1, 93–127.
113. The Jetavana was the principal location for numerous conversations. See C. Rhys Davids, *Book of Kindred Sayings*, pt. 1, 96 n. 1. However, other venues are also named, such as a market town called Medaḷumpa. See Horner, *Collection of the Middle Length Sayings*, 2:302.
114. At the time of the Buddha (and of Prasenajit), the Kosala kingdom included Varanasi (and, therefore, Sārnāth). See Nundo Lal Dey, *The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India* (1927; 3rd ed., Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1971), 103; D. C. Sircar, *Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India* (2nd ed., rev. and enl., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971), 254–55.
115. It is irrelevant to my position whether the relief shows Sārnāth or Śrāvastī, since my point would remain the same: it is a scene showing the devotions of the king (at a sacred site) and not a life

event of Śākyamuni Buddha.

116. Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, 2:2. Also see Burlingame, *Buddhist Legends*, 40, where King Prasenajit offers to build a pavilion for the Buddha, but the Buddha refuses the offer.
117. It might even be argued that, because of the importance of Sārnāth, where the Buddha's first sermon was performed, it would have been the first teaching site to have had a monument erected to commemorate a teaching event.
118. Cunningham, *The Stūpa of Bharhut*, 90.
119. I develop and justify this theme in my forthcoming book.
120. The purpose of including the story of Prasenajit in the *Middle Length Sayings* is to show his good works and spiritual evolution. See Horner, *Collection of the Middle Length Sayings*, 2:xvi n. 1.
121. Rockhill, *Life of the Buddha*, 203, says that the first Tibetan monarch claims descent from Prasenajit, King of Kosala, "one of the early converts and the lifelong friend of the Buddha Gautama."
122. It is unfortunate that a text comparable to the *Aśokāvadāna* is not known for King Prasenajit.
123. Illustrated in S. Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, fig. 5.16.
124. Dehejia refers to S. Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, 99, fig. 6.10, upper relief; and J. Huntington, "Sowing the Seeds of the Lotus," pt. 4, 30. The term *pageantry theory* has been coined by Dehejia. Neither John nor I have presented the idea in this way.
125. Since passion plays are specifically connected with the passion (that is, the suffering of Christ between the time of the Last Supper and his death) and the crucifixion of Christ, not the life of Christ in general, the analogy that Dehejia infers is particularly inappropriate. A Buddhist equivalent, if there is one, would have to be concerned with the death and events associated with the death of the Buddha.
126. S. Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, 99. Regarding John Huntington's reference that Dehejia mentions, he says that a scene at Sāncī may be a "re-enactment of the event at the site before a group of pilgrims." J. Huntington, "Sowing the Seeds of the Lotus," pt. 4, 30. Like me, he does not refer to anything as formalized as a passion



play tradition.

127. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 1988), 846.
128. For a typical account of the Great Departure, see Jones, *Mahāvastu*, 2:155–61; also see Patricia Eichenbaum Karetzky, *The Life of the Buddha, Ancient Scriptural and Pictorial Traditions* (Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1992), 70–77.
129. Jones, *Mahāvastu*, 2:156, records that the Bodhisattva's groom, Chandaka, "cried out at the top of his voice so that the king and all the people in Kapilavastu might be awakened. But no one woke up." This passage emphasizes the soundness with which the people of the city slept.
130. Karetzky, *Life of the Buddha*, 70.
131. Bactro-Gandhāran representations generally show *devas* uplifting the horse, although often two, rather than four, figures are depicted. For examples, see S. Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, fig. 8.19; Islay Lyons and Harald Ingholt, *Gandhāran Art in Pakistan* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1957), fig. 45.
132. If this scene indeed represents the Great Departure, this figure might be the Bodhisattva's groom, Chandaka. However, it would be peculiar for a groom to be carrying a ritual water vessel. If this is a reenactment, this figure might represent Chandaka but, assuming that he has a ceremonial role, might appropriately show him carrying a ritual object.
133. Foucher identifies this as a *jambu* tree. See Marshall and Foucher, *Monuments of Sāñchī*, vol. 2, text opposite pl. 40.
134. Edward J. Thomas, *The Life of the Buddha as Legend and History* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1927; rpt., 3rd ed., 1969), 55. The *Lalitavistara* records a turning-around place of the Bodhisattva's groom, Chandaka. See Bays, *The Voice of the Buddha*, 1:339.
135. Thomas, *Life of the Buddha*, 55. Thomas also claims that according to one version of the story, Kaṇṭhaka did not turn around (p. 56), but the earth did (p. 55). Pāli texts record this story as relating to the Buddha Vipassin. (Thomas, *Life of the Buddha*, 55.) The lives of each of the *mānuṣī* Buddhas are held to be identical in Buddhist theory, though not every text recounts each of the life stories in detail for each Buddha.
136. My suggestion that this may be a reenactment occurring at the very place of the departure, Kapilavastu, implies that the celebration might be related to activities at important Buddhist sites. Dehejia's perception of the "site theory" and the "pageantry theory" as distinct, unrelated subjects does not take the full implications of my proposal into account.
137. S. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 405.
138. I suggest that Dehejia's use of the word *whole* overstates the case. Most devotees probably had more than one purpose in going to a *stūpa*—perhaps the principal and "authentic" one was to be in the presence of Buddhist relics, but there are many others, including social and political, that must be taken into account when understanding the phenomenon and its popularity throughout the centuries.
139. S. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 405.
140. Indeed, while it might be a bias of today's art-collecting, art-appreciating world that a golden image of a Buddha might have more "value" than a portion of his ashes, to practicing Buddhists throughout the Buddhist world and throughout Buddhist history, the relic would be the greater treasure.
141. This phenomenon is discussed in my forthcoming book.
142. I specifically add "architecture" here. It is sometimes forgotten in the analysis of individual compositions, such as those illustrated by Dehejia in her article or by me in "Early Buddhist Art" and here, that these reliefs adorned structures that were built for purposes (often, to house relics) and that these purposes must be taken into account when analyzing the art.
143. Dehejia here again addresses my work. See S. Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, 70.
144. I believe she means early Buddhist art of India.
145. In this case Dehejia cites my work, referring to a statement I made in "Early Buddhist Art," 405, which she also quotes in her n. 6. What I say there is: "Essentially, I suggest that the early Buddhist art of India was not primarily concerned with the biography of Śākyamuni Buddha, as has been assumed for so many decades."
146. Also see discussion above.

147. It is unclear here whether she is using Bhārhut as an example or whether she is implying that this situation is applicable only at Bhārhut.
148. The source of the “time and place” idea is S. Huntington, “Early Buddhist Art,” 402–3.
149. S. Huntington, “Early Buddhist Art,” 402. This statement is then further clarified by the discussion that follows.
150. The pluralization of the word *proponent* is puzzling since I do not know of anyone beside myself who has discussed the “time and place” concept.
151. Dehejia’s statement is unclear. While she (incorrectly) infers that I have said that both time and place are absent from “aniconic” scenes, she assumes that I would interpret such “aniconic” renderings as “site scenes,” thereby, I suggest, implying that “place” is not absent. (After all, a site is a place.)
152. Here she shows that she does not apparently believe that events in the life of Aśoka are Buddha life events. However, the significance of a representation of an event in the life of Aśoka is not made clear here since the idea was never discussed in her text, and it is not specified how this subject relates to the notions of multivalency or of aniconism.
153. Early proponents of the aniconic theory related the practice to Hīnayāna Buddhism, assuming that Hīnayānists had a doctrinal prohibition against creating Buddha images. Concomitantly, it was believed that Mahāyāna Buddhists were responsible for the introduction of the Buddha image into the art. It is now known that Hīnayānists used images as well and that Hīnayāna literature does not contain evidence of widespread (if any) prohibition against Buddha imagery. Therefore, one of the cornerstones of the aniconic theory—the presupposition of a widespread prohibition against creating images—is insupportable. I discussed the fallaciousness of the long-held Hīnayāna prohibition model in my “Early Buddhist Art,” 401–2. Dehejia agrees that the old Hīnayāna-Mahāyāna model must be abandoned (47).
154. I use the term in quotes since, if the phenomenon exists, I nonetheless propose that the name it has been given is inappropriate. First, I do not believe that a phenomenon should be defined according to what it is not (“not an icon”); second, since the term is associated with the concept of deification, it is inappropriate for the Buddha. See n. 28 above.
155. Dehejia’s presupposition that I see only two

alternatives to what have been traditionally identified as aniconic scenes, namely a “site” interpretation and the “pageantry” interpretation, is simply not correct. My forthcoming book, and hopefully this article to some extent, will make it clear that I see a number of alternative interpretations. That I have allowed for—and am thoroughly concerned with—other types of subjects is clear in the *Art Journal* article, where I say: “This article presents *some* of my findings in a *preliminary* fashion by focusing on *one* type of representation. Specifically, I will examine *a type of relief that is among those* that are usually said to illustrate scenes from the life of the Buddha, with the Buddha, however, not depicted. It is possible that *most, if not all*, of these compositions do not represent events in the life of the Buddha at all, but rather portray worship and adoration at sacred Buddhist sites” (S. Huntington, “Early Buddhist Art,” 402; italics added here). When I present what Dehejia calls “the pageantry idea” in *Art of Ancient India*, I do not state that I conceive of pageantry scenes as one of only two alternative explanations for the so-called aniconic scenes. Further, although Dehejia recognizes what she calls the “pageantry” theory in her article, the introduction to her article implies a polarity between what she calls the “totally aniconic interpretation of the early 1900s [and] the somewhat restrictive site-oriented interpretation of this last decade” (45). Her statement implies that the “site” interpretation was offered as a sole alternative to aniconism.

156. When Aśoka or other early kings erected pillars, surmounted by lions, *cahras*, and other motifs, these probably represent emblematic configurations. However, when these pillars are later depicted in artistic renderings at Sāñcī, Bhārhut, and other sites, often with worshipers adoring them and circumambulating them, they serve a narrative, rather than emblematic, purpose.
157. The role of my research in the formulation of Dehejia’s ideas is not clearly defined in her text and notes. I am aware that Dehejia is publishing a book in which much of what is published in her article serves as a chapter. I hope that acknowledgment of Dehejia’s derivations from my work are therein sufficiently cited. In addition to the site theory, which Dehejia incorporates as a major aspect of her work, her borrowing of the term *śleṣa*, her reference to “time and place,” and other themes from my work should be cited. Aside from the issue of crediting scholar(s) for their contributions, it is essential to future generations that the derivation of scholarly ideas be clearly presented and acknowledged so that the evolution of scholarly



thinking may be traced.

158. In his essay entitled "The Beginnings of Buddhist Art," Foucher states: "It is no longer a secret to anyone that the regular sweep of this evolution [the Indic art of Sāñcī and related sites] was brusquely interrupted by a veritable artistic cataclysm. The Hellenized sculptors of the northwest, strangers to the native tradition of Central India, satisfied to the full; and even outwent, the wishes of their Buddhist patrons by creating for their use the Indo-Greek type of Buddha. Immediately their colleagues of the low country, seduced by this wonderful innovation, greeted with no less enthusiasm than the laity the rupture of the magic charm which had weighed so heavily and so long upon the ancient Buddhist school." Alfred Foucher, "The Beginnings of Buddhist Art," in his *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art and Other Essays in Indian and Central-Asian Archaeology* (Paris: Paul Geuthner; London: Humphrey Milford, 1917), 24. See also Foucher, "The Greek Origin of the Image of the Buddha," in *Beginnings of Buddhist Art and Other Essays*, 111–37. For brief discussion of the historiography of the theory of aniconism, see S. Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art," 401, 406.
159. I am grateful to Janice M. Glowski for introducing me to these terms as used in the fields of Comparative Religions and Comparative Studies.
160. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, 427.
161. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, 407. I am grateful to Arnold M. Zwicky for his clarification of these terms in relation to linguistic origin and use and the information he provided me about the originator of these terms, Kenneth Pike of the University of Michigan.

## REJOINDER TO SUSAN HUNTINGTON

MY ESSAY ON MULTIVALENCE AND THE PROBLEM OF ANICONISM proposed the existence of three alternative ways, sometimes conflated, of interpreting early Buddhist reliefs; it did “not use a systematic and comprehensive approach to critiquing [Susan Huntington’s] ideas” (S. Huntington, “Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems: Another Look,” *Ars Orientalis* 22 [1992]: 142) since such a critique was not my objective. Nor is criticism my intention in this brief rejoinder; rather, I wish succinctly to restate my stance on the issue of *aniconism*, a term that is best abandoned in the context of early Buddhist art since it seems to carry so much “baggage” with it.

It is my opinion that the majority of early Buddhist reliefs—whether they tell the story of the Buddha or, alternatively, in Susan Huntington’s current formulation, of personalities whose lives intersected with that of the Buddha—do indeed contain a visual reference to the presence of the Buddha. A wide range of emblems, including a slab of stone, an empty seat, footprints, and empty space topped by a parasol, constitute the Buddha’s presence as “absent signifier.” Terms such as *indexical trace* or more simply *visual marker*, generated in student seminars, may be more appropriate to designate the many emblematic indicators of the Buddha’s presence; my forthcoming book on Buddhist visual narratives will address the use of such terminology.

I visualize a sophisticated ancient artistic and literary milieu and, hence, multivalence is a key concept in my interpretation of early Buddhist reliefs. A panel focusing on an “absent signifier,” and which I interpret as referring primarily to an event in the Buddha’s life, frequently contains a secondary level of meaning that carries reference to the site of that event (with trees and pillars simply representing themselves, as Susan Huntington clarifies in her response). Conversely, a panel depicting a pilgrimage site may carry reference to the figure whose actions converted it into a sacred *ṭīrtha*. In either case, the panels may contain additional allusions to Buddhist ideals, with the tree bearing reference to the wisdom of enlightenment and the wheel-crowned pillar testifying to the truth of the doctrine.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the substantial contribution made by the Huntingtons in accentuating the importance of pilgrimage and *ṭīrthas* and thereby challenging the unquestioning acceptance of aniconism. Beyond this, in the spirit of *The Journal of Asian Studies*’ recommendation to its reviewers to “generate light and not heat,” it may be best to agree to disagree.

VIDYA DEHEJIA





## BOOK REVIEWS

*Masterpieces of Japanese Screen Painting: The American Collections.* Introductory essay and commentaries by Miyeko Murase. 232 pp., 124 pp. of color, 13 gatefolds, chronology, glossary, biographies of artists, bibliography, index of artists, index of screens. New York: George Braziller, 1990. \$150.

To leaf through this book is to remind ourselves—postmodernist theory notwithstanding—of the solemn power of beautiful objects to move us with their special gut-wrenching intensity. Few readers will be able to stifle the involuntary gasp that slips out whenever we encounter the transcendent perfection represented by the works of art in this book.

Braziller pulled out all the stops for this luxurious volume. The usual dimensions (12½ by 14 inches) happily accommodate the horizontality of the screen format, which defies reduction to book size without losing all sense, and most detail, of the original. Thirteen gatefold reproductions enable the viewer to take in screens paired side by side, measuring cumulatively in excess of four feet. The device of the gatefold also permits a full-page detail to be seen in juxtaposition with the whole from which it was taken. When the reproduction of a single screen spans the gutter (three panels to a page), an even bolder-scale image results. Slide curators surely will jump for joy at such a treasure trove of high-quality source material, and readers must necessarily rejoice at the rare opportunity to study magnificent objects so advantageously presented. The designer and the publisher deserve hearty congratulations for this intelligent and imaginative design.

If the presentation is innovative, such cannot be said for the introduction. It expands little beyond Murase's text for the exhibition catalogue *Byōbu: Japanese Screens from New York Collections* (New York: The Asia Society, 1971). I do not know the protocol when a scholarly text is reprinted with minor change, but it would seem appropriate somewhere to acknowledge this fact, particularly when the publisher is charging \$150 for the book. When it came out nineteen years ago, the material filled a gap in the literature by expounding the construction, origins, and development of the various kinds of Japanese screens. It tackled these issues in nothing less than the general context of Japanese painting from its inception to the present, managing this leviathan task in a mere eight pages (which should give some idea of the degree of depth). Although in this later version Murase expanded the text a little, updated some footnotes, and incorporated some new information, such as material from the great exhibition of Muromachi screen painting at the Tokyo National Museum in 1989, the facelift was cosmetic rather than structural. The "book" thus preserves the

format of an exhibition catalogue. The conversion produces certain anomalies, like the relatively prolonged discussion of the so-called Realist painters Ōkyo and Goshun, both of whose works appeared in the exhibition at Asia Society but are not represented in the current volume (ditto for screens showing "In and Out of Kyoto"). The reader senses that something is amiss but, without knowing the previous version, is hard put to figure out what it is.

Who is the intended audience for this book? The information in the introduction, presented in expository fashion and repeating standard Japanese opinions, is by now familiar to specialists. The inclusion of a table of Japanese eras indicates that Murase is acknowledging the needs of the generalist reader. The footnotes, however, for the most part refer to works in Japanese, even when literature in English exists. There is a generous sprinkling of Japanese terms like *tsuitate* (single-panel screen), *emaki* (picture scroll), and *bakufu* (military government). Although she defines a term the first time she uses it and supplies a glossary for those unable to memorize Japanese terminology at first exposure (*tsuitate* is not, however, in this glossary), the book's daunting five-pound weight, floppy gatefolds, and horizontal shape discourage flipping back and forth. And, in deference to nonspecialists, it seems gratuitous repeatedly to use Japanese words when there are perfectly serviceable English equivalents. Murase refers to numerous objects that she does not reproduce. Only a specialist, I suspect, could readily call to mind the image of the screens of ladies from the Shōshōin mentioned on pp. 8–9. Moreover, references to the location of reproductions (when sporadically supplied) lead to Japanese-language works. In sum, while pitched to the generalist, the introduction reveals itself fully intelligible only to someone who already knows the material.

Murase took more care with the section treating the screens themselves. The selection combines old favorites beautifully presented (like the Met's *Irides* by Kōrin (no. 10) or the *Waves of Matsushima* (no. 19) by Sōtatsu in the Freer) with little-known or previously unpublished pieces like the Freer's *Bird-and-Flower* screens by Genga (no. 1), although collections from the West Coast get decidedly short shrift. Also, one could quibble over the use of the controversial word *masterpiece*. For some of the objects that had also appeared in her Asia Society catalogue, Murase conducted new research or revised previous opinions. She pulls a coup by uniting in print for the first time a separated pair of screens depicting *Cherries at Yoshino* (no. 11). The grouping of the objects into four sections—Flowers and Birds, Landscapes, Human Activities, and Animals and Demons—works effectively to encourage viewers



to compare similar themes handled by artists of different periods and stylistic affiliations. Information is on the whole accurate, although a peccadillo-obsessed reviewer can always pounce upon small points, such as whether the ropes under the bellies of the horses in *Horses in a Stable* (no. 36a–b) really could have been used to help support the horse's weight. A horse weighs roughly half a ton, and a rope used in such a fashion would cut into its flesh; the ropes more likely function to restrain the horses from lying down (it is interesting to note that the one recumbent horse reclines in a tatami-matted stall). References appear in two places: as footnotes accompanying each entry and also in a special section of bibliographic references at the end. These bibliographic references are reasonably complete, encompassing doctoral dissertations and Japanese-language publications. Because artists' biographies are treated in another separate section at the end, biographical detail does not clutter the entries themselves, where description, miscellaneous observations, and occasional juicy tidbits of information govern.

Art books, particularly lavish coffee-table books like this one, differ from other kinds of scholarly production in that they are required to serve a far more diverse audience than the one interested in—to use an example close at hand—journal articles like “The Meiji Constitution: Theory and Practice.” To what degree specialists are entitled to expect from deluxe art books the familiar niceties of argument, extensive documentation, and probing questions—the stuff of real scholarship—remains an issue whose verdict is still out. Braziller has managed to combine attractive packaging and meaty text in other of its high-priced art books, notably *Hiroshige: One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, proving that the two are not mutually exclusive. *Masterpieces of Japanese Screen Painting* engages the right side of the brain more than it does the left. It succeeds unequivocally in its appeal to connoisseurs, collectors, and lovers of gorgeous things. It provides certain services too to scholars, though, and—to return to the equine motif—let us not look a beautiful gift book in the mouth.

MELINDA TAKEUCHI

*Akten des XIII. Internationalen Kongresses für klassische Archäologie, Berlin 1988.* Deutsches Archäologisches Institut. xvii + 700 pp., 266 essays, 95 plates, 5 folding maps, numerous text figures, list of participants. Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1990. DM 98.

The XIIIth International Congress for Classical Archaeology, held in Berlin in July 1988, included under its broad theme of Hellenism a number of sessions on

the Hellenized East, ranging from Egypt, Palestine, and coastal Syria across inner Syria, Mesopotamia, and Iran to Central Asia and India. The number of sessions on the East, and the choice of Hellenism in the East as the topic for the first plenary session, reflect a somewhat belated recognition of the importance of this area in the Hellenistic period. The contributions include general assessments of the Hellenistic culture of an area, examinations of problems of particular architectural and artistic forms in a defined geographical region, and more narrowly focused studies of aspects of single sites. Architecture is well represented, sculpture less so. The papers of the opening plenary session cover a broad geographical range and have relatively general themes: A. Invernizzi on Seleucid art in Mesopotamia, R. A. Stucky on Hellenistic Syria, R. Fleischer on Seleucid royal portraits, E. Netzer on late Hellenistic architecture in Palestine, P. Bernard on the religious architecture of Central Asia, and G. A. Pugachenkova on the culture of north Bactriana.

Some papers are represented in the Congress proceedings by a full text, others only by abstracts. Since I did not attend, I am not able to amplify on those presented only as abstracts. In any case, the number and diversity of subjects treated make comments on each impossible. I shall therefore comment on common themes and selectively on issues raised by several papers. The selection is influenced by my current research interests, and omissions are not to be construed as reflections on the degree of interest or importance of those papers.

The papers of the opening plenary session suggest a theme that also emerges from some of the more specialized contributions: the variety in degree, depth, and form of the impact of Hellenism in different regions and also in various media. Invernizzi argues, for example, that the importance of Seleucia on the Tigris as a Hellenistic center of production explains the deep roots of Hellenism in the area. The material evidence dating to the Hellenistic period of the site is meager, consisting mostly of seals, bullae, and coroplastic products, but it does seem to demonstrate that the artistic production of Seleucia was essentially indistinguishable from that of Greece and Asia Minor. In other regions, local traditions seem to have strongly affected architecture and other arts after the arrival of the Greeks. Stucky, for example, argues that in Syria local traditions mingled with Greek ideas to produce hybrid forms such as the heterodox Corinthian capital discussed by D. Schlumberger and Paul Bernard and the palace (Qasr el Abd) at Arak el Amir. G. A. Pugachenkova emphasizes the strength of local tradition in the architecture of north Bactriana, with only a few elements of architectural ornament imported from the Greek world. This idea is also supported in a paper by Paul Bernard, to which I shall return. On the other hand, J.-Cl. Gardin finds exactly the opposite phenomenon in the pottery of the area, which closely follows the development of form and fabric in the western part

of the Hellenistic world. In a provocative paper, he first explains this by the hypothesis of a constant trade in pottery, then points out the many difficulties with his explanation, including the apparently opposite situation in the intermediate regions—inner Syria, Mesopotamia, and Iran—where some Greek shapes were imitated but local traditions remained strong, as documented by Lise Hannestad. Gardin further points out that the strongly Greek character of the pottery also differs from the mixed architecture of Aï Khanoum.

A number of papers deal with religious architecture. Paul Bernard's discussion of religious architecture in Central Asia in the Hellenistic period is especially thought-provoking, even provocative. He assesses the temples of the Greek colony of Aï Khanoum (Afghanistan) and, secondarily, of other Central Asian sites, as evidence for the role played by local traditions in the religious architecture created by Greek colonists in the East. While noting the apparent similarity between the extra-mural temple at Aï Khanoum and the earliest form of the Temple of Zeus Megistos at Dura-Europos, as reconstructed by Frank Brown, he suggests that the similarity might result not from common roots in late Babylonian architecture but from adaptation in each case of local traditions; the local Central Asian tradition is manifested in the earliest form of the temple of DaPverjin tepe in Bactriana. He also dismisses as uncertain the Seleucid date of the first Temple of Zeus Megistos, a date that seems to be supported by unpublished ceramic evidence. I have to agree that the geographical distance between Dura-Europos and Aï Khanoum, coupled with the lack of connecting links of the Seleucid period in Mesopotamia and Iran, raises problems for the assumption of a common origin for the two temple plans, but the similarity remains so striking that I prefer the hypothesis of common variations on a Babylonian temple type.

The idea of a common derivation is further strengthened by J.-M. Dentzer's report on new excavations in the sanctuary of Baalshamin at Si<sup>2</sup> in the Hauran. These excavations demonstrate the incorrectness of the plan of Temple 2 published by Butler. Rather than having a square cella surrounded by corridors on all four sides, the building was a *Breitraum* temple, with a rectangular cella against the rear wall flanked by two small rooms and opening onto a forecourt. The occurrence in the Nabataean area of a temple plan similar to those of the extra-mural temple at Aï Khanoum and the early form of the Temple of Zeus Megistos at Dura-Europos shows how widespread the type was. Dentzer's report also raises interesting issues about local traditions. He interprets the sanctuary as a typical Oriental high place and argues that the complex shape and changing axes of the terraces result from the need to adapt a terrace plan to difficult terrain rather than from a complex geometric scheme, as asserted by Paul Collart. He notes that a rock juts out in the center of the cella of the Temple of Baalshamin; can the desire to preserve a sacred natural feature have been a factor in its placement?

Thus, the papers on the Hellenized East included in the proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress on Classical Archaeology demonstrate the complex cultural situation in the area. The examples I have cited clearly illustrate the importance of carefully studying individual sites and each aspect of material culture before attempting syntheses. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the effects of Hellenism varied widely and that preexisting local culture played an important role in the forms of its impact.

SUSAN B. DOWNEY

*Ein Weltwunder der Antike. Persepolis.* By Leo Trumpelmann with contributions by Manijeh Abka'i-Khavari, Heinz Luschey, Wolfram Kleiss, and Hermann Dannheimer. 103 pp., maps and plans on binding, 17 color plates, and 58 black and white illustrations. Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1988.

This volume, dedicated to Friedrich Krefter on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday, is the catalogue accompanying an exhibition of Krefter's reconstructed drawings, plans, and a few selected watercolors of Persepolis, held from 22 September 1988 to 9 January 1989 at the Prähistorische Staatssammlung in Munich. Through the exhibition and catalogue Trumpelmann sought to extend the audience for Krefter's work beyond scholars to the general public (p. 7). The publication may also have the effect of introducing a new generation of students to Krefter, whose work, *Persepolis Rekonstruktionen*, has long been out of print.

The book opens with brief forewords by Kleiss and Dannheimer. There follows what may be the most interesting section of the work from a scholar's perspective, a brief biography of Krefter. Like many noted archaeological architects trained in Germany, he was first a practicing architect before turning his skills to archaeology. At the invitation of the eminent archaeologist Ernst Herzfeld, Krefter participated in the excavations at Pasargadae in 1928. In 1931 he again worked closely with Herzfeld at Persepolis, even assuming control of the excavations in 1934–35 between the tenures of Herzfeld and his successor E. Schmidt. Krefter then accepted a post as the Professor of Architectural History at Tehran, where he remained for two years until 1937. During these early years in Iran he already showed a talent for architectural reconstruction, and several of his drawings of Persepolis appeared in Herzfeld's 1941 publication *Iran in the Ancient East*. Evidently, Herzfeld and Krefter were already at this time preparing to draw elaborate reconstructions of the buildings on the site (p. 15). Krefter left Iran before World War II and never again returned to the site. Apparently, he had not made much more progress on the reconstructed drawings before his departure. Many years later in 1962,



while living in Berlin, Krefter visited an exhibition of Persepolis at Essen, where he saw for the first time since his stay in Iran the famous gold foundation documents, which he himself had discovered. This led to a meeting with Lushey, director of the DAI at Tehran, who asked him to make reconstructed line drawings and models of the buildings and site of Persepolis. Thus, after a hiatus of almost twenty years, Krefter began work anew on Persepolis. He had at his disposal Schmidt's documentation and OIP publication, as well as the documentation of the Iranian Archaeological Service's excavations at the site directed by Godard (and, seemingly, his own earlier work, although this is not stated specifically in the text).

The first fruits of his renewed work on Persepolis was a model of Persepolis at 1:200, which the German government presented in 1967 to the Iranian government (previously stored in the Tehran Museum). Krefter also made another model of the site, at 1:1000, for the Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Berlin. Finally in 1971 his *Persepolis Rekonstruktionen* appeared.

The next section of the book contains a wide-ranging introduction to the site of Persepolis, focusing mainly upon the Apadana ("Thronsaal"). Since the book was written for the general public, one may perhaps excuse the popular tone of the text. There is a great deal of exaggeration, and a relatively large amount of space is devoted to arguing that the Apadana is a "wonder" of the ancient world (hence the book's title).

This section also surveys previous attempts at reconstructed drawings of buildings at Persepolis (dating back to the seventeenth century), and a few examples of the most famous ones are illustrated. There is a short account of the mysterious unfinished tomb and architectural foundations located between Persepolis and Naqsh-e Rostam. Herzfeld partially excavated the tomb and identified it (as other scholars subsequently did) as the tomb of Cambyses. Trumpelmann suggests that the architectural remains at this site are those of a palace, similar to Palace S at Pasargadae in size, proportions, and style and, like the Pasargadae palaces, situated within a garden setting. He also suggests that this palace and tomb are those of Vishtaspa, father of Darius I (M. Roaf, *Sculptures and Sculptors at Persepolis* [London, 1983], 150, has suggested that the tomb is an early version of the tomb of Darius). The young Darius I himself is briefly and romantically introduced. The speculation that the Marv Dasht plain had special attachment to his family is, however, probably correct and may help explain his selection of this site for one of his capital cities.

Throughout this section of the book the most extensive commentary (as well as praise) is reserved for the Apadana ("Thronsaal"). There is a long discussion on the roofing of the structure and the history of such roofing. Since the book is meant for the general museum visitor, reference here to some of the drawings in the back of the book would, it seems, have been useful. Good points are made about the large amount of

wood in the structure and the costs and difficulties of acquiring it (we learn also that the Apadana is the largest building possible with a wooden roof and the most expensive ever constructed up to that time). There is a short summary of throne halls in the ancient Orient and a longer (and better) discussion of columned halls with drawings (with the standard references to Urartu, North Syria, the Hittites, Hasanlu IV, Tepe Nush-e Jan, Godin Tepe, and Pasargadae). The author goes on to link the columnar porches on the Apadana with the Greek stoa. In his opinion, these columnar porches are typically Greek in arrangement and form (p. 32) and are probably adapted (but not slavishly borrowed) from that source.

This is important. Clearly, Greek architectural form exerted some influence at both Pasargadae and Persepolis. I think that the author is, however, mistaken in his attempts later in the book to link the Apadana with a Greek architect. An essay that had been to this point a balanced and well-argued statement on the history of this type of building suddenly becomes very speculative. The author's determined attempts to link the Apadana to Greek architecture involve, among other things, a digression on the foundation deposits—a source of debate since their discovery. Trumpelmann dates the deposit later than usual, then attempts to relate the coins directly to the workers rather than, as normally done, to an imperial statement made by Darius. For Trumpelmann, the coins represent the "Vaterstadt" of the workers, who deposited them at an important ceremony to commemorate their contribution to the building and assure the technical quality of their work (pp. 35–37). In this scenario, the pieces of amber found in the deposits also represent the origins of the workers; this time, however, they are Cilicians, not because amber is found in Cilicia (it is not) but because: 1) the Cilicians are named in the Susa foundation charter; 2) they may have been entrusted with the transport of large stone and wood (they were famous in antiquity as sailors, and wood came from Cilicia); 3) they may have been the only people who knew the source of amber (which may have been a well-guarded secret), since they were seafarers. The value and number of Lydian coins suggest to the author that they represent the origin of the most important person(s) in the construction: the architect (designer) and builder (executor, perhaps the same person as the designer). From this, we learn that this architect(s) may have been associated with the Artemision at Ephesos (the Apadana and the Artemision are similar in scale); thus the Apadana becomes another "wonder" of the ancient world owing to the presence of this architect.

This type of argumentation is more than just a little disturbing, not so much because of the lack of rigor in its application but because it perpetuates an old-fashioned view that validates the achievements of the Achaemenid Persians only through linkage to Greece. This idea has its roots in such pioneers of ancient art as Gisela Richter and Henri Frankfort (indeed, in the

footsteps of Richter, Trumpelmann suggests that the relief decoration on the building may have been the work of the Aiginetans). It comes as a surprise here, since the author has been at pains in the previous discussions to place the Apadana within the context of Iranian and Mesopotamian traditions.

We are on firmer ground in the discussion of proportions and metrology of the Apadana (pp. 40–41). Here Trumpelmann, drawing upon his earlier work on this subject, argues convincingly that the facade determined the basic proportions of the building; using the intercolumniations yields a ratio of 3–7–3, where 3 = the width of the towers, 7 = the width of the porch. There follows a list of each of the buildings on the Persepolis terrace, with a short discussion of their functions. It is suggested that the Hall of One Hundred Columns (Throne Hall) may have been divided up and used as offices for court officials—an intriguing idea given the large number of officials we know to have been at the site (the Persepolis Fortification Tablets record the names of hundreds of officials in the vicinity in the years 509–494 B.C.) and perhaps more convincing than previous explanations of the building as a museum, treasury, throne hall, or ceremonial pavilion associated with the army. The author does not, however, discuss problems of lighting in the interior of the structure (clerestory?) or the lack of doors (were work areas separated by curtains or partitions?). A kitchen and a dining hall are placed in the buildings immediately to the east. These areas were first excavated by the Iranian Archaeological Service after the conclusion of the Oriental Institute's project in 1939 (Schmidt did not discuss them) and have sometimes been identified as the barracks for the soldiers and the quarters for chariots and horses. The troubling building identified by Herzfeld as the "Harem" is here called a "Beamtenwohntrakt." Storerooms have also been suggested for this area (D. N. Wilber, *Persepolis* [Princeton, 1989], 66). Of the more enigmatic structures on the Persepolis terrace Trumpelmann has little to say. He follows Schmidt's original suggestion that the poorly preserved Palace D was a palace; Krefter in his publication heavily reconstructed the building and identified it as a banquet hall for the army. Trumpelmann does not restore Schmidt's so-called Palace G but locates in this area a possible sanctuary (Krefter again heavily reconstructed the plan and made it a banquet hall for "volker"). The area where the post-Achaemenid Palace H is later constructed is also identified as a possible sanctuary (p. 51).

The narrative part of the book closes by discussing Alexander's destruction of Persepolis (pp. 47–51). Trumpelmann accepts Arrian's statement that the burning of Persepolis was a well-calculated decision meant as an act of revenge for Persian atrocities in Greece. He argues, however, that only the Apadana and the Treasury were burnt, since they were the only two buildings on the site to show clear evidence of burning. They were also the two

major "public" buildings on the terrace (and as such their burning would symbolize the end of the Achaemenid Persian empire and a fitting conclusion to Alexander's campaign); in addition, the Macedonians were unlikely to burn the areas of the terrace where they were living. Developing an idea originally put forward by Krefter, Trumpelmann suggests that wood from the unfinished gate (before the Hall of One Hundred Columns) and the Palace of Xerxes provided fuel to burn the Apadana.

The last half of the book contains the catalogue of the drawings in the exhibition, including the 1:1000 model of Persepolis now in Berlin, twenty-nine of Krefter's restored sections and perspective views, the central panel from the north stairway of the Apadana, his reconstructed plan of Persepolis, three watercolors of the ruins on the site by Krefter, and color photographs of the gold and silver foundation documents from the Apadana found by Krefter (now in Iran). Some catalogue entries contain information not found in the text; others could have been improved by fuller explanation (e.g., Kat. 7, 9, and 11 show the Apadana stairways with the replacement central panels without remark; there is no evidence for the decorated bands on the doors shown in Kat. 18; both Kat. 10 and 31 state that Xerxes removed the central panels from the Apadana because he was offended that they showed him only as crown prince—an idea for which there is absolutely no evidence). Problems in layout affect Kat. 22: the two halves of the drawing do not align.

Krefter's skill as a draftsman is evident in every drawing. His style combines minute observation and rendering of detail (best seen in the restored sections) with an impressionistic, abbreviated line (in the reconstructed perspective views). This review is not the place for a discussion of the accuracy of Krefter's reconstructions. Keeping in mind the intended audience of the book, I am struck, however, by the lack of reference to the nature of the archaeology of the site. Krefter's drawings are presented as a *fait accompli* without any discussion of the meager physical evidence with which he often had to contend. His plans are, in general, to be trusted, although it has always been very difficult to identify on the plans what was actually found *in situ*, what is reconstructed from architectural *membra disiecta*, and what is hypothesized. (In this sense it is interesting to note that Trumpelmann uses [fig. 32] a slightly altered plan from Schmidt's final publication of the site rather than Krefter's reconstructed plan.) The restored sections are perhaps open to more criticism, since very little of the buildings' superstructures remained. Krefter's drawings reappear in very recent publications, perhaps serving as testament to the legacy that this gifted architect has left.

This book serves very well its two main purposes: to provide a lasting record of the exhibition and to introduce Krefter's work to the general public. Because of the somewhat hyperbolic text and the attempts to tie the Apadana to a Greek architect, it must be used with



caution by students and scholars unfamiliar with the recent thinking on not only the architectural history of the site of Persepolis but also Achaemenid Persian culture in general.

M. B. GARRISON

*The Integrative Art of Modern Thailand.* By Herbert P. Phillips. 138 pp., 56 color plates, essays, exhibition catalogue, artists' profiles, bibliography. Berkeley: Lowie Museum of Anthropology, University of California at Berkeley, 1992. Distributed by University of Washington Press. \$24.95 (paper).

Anyone interested in modern Asian painting would be much indebted to Herbert Phillips for spending five years in researching and assembling this wide-ranging panorama of contemporary Thai art. The catalogue reproduces the art in excellent plates on glossy paper, thus showing to advantage the depth and variation in color of the paintings, their sharpness, and their tonal nuances. The "Historical and Cultural Context" section is illustrated with small color inserts, while each work in "Exhibition Artwork" is explained with a paragraph or two of text. Art historians might have preferred longer catalogue entries and shorter contextual explanations, but Phillips makes it clear from the beginning that he is not an art historian. He prefers to let the Thai artists speak about their art, while he focuses on providing background material for a readership that may need it. For those unfamiliar with the day-to-day practical and commercial concerns of modern artists and with the historical setting of contemporary Thai art, the information provided is quite comprehensive and clearly written.

The range of art styles in the exhibition—from traditional linear drawing to expressionist color compositions and beyond—is pleasantly surprising and impressive. To think that this broad and variegated spectrum of creative talent was developed in the last thirty years alone heightens one's respect for the achievement of the twenty-eight artists represented here. In keeping with his objective of "letting the artists speak for themselves," Phillips also relied on eighty-eight Thai artists to choose the works, which he then narrowed down to the objects in the catalogue. As the reader might infer from the contextual half of the catalogue, the "artists' groups" or *klum*, and the sometimes fierce student-teacher loyalties, were bound to give the selection process added spice. The result is successful in its range and subject matter, even if some works in the exhibit are more truly exceptional than others. Their variety and energy compensate for minor fluctuations in attainment.

If only by contrast, the background on "commercial"

art helps to make the objects in the exhibit stand out in high relief, even when the "commercial" art itself is rather accomplished and professional. Also useful is the brief historical sketch of Thai art, which sets the stage for the outpouring of personal expression, which had been previously eschewed in the creative process. Similarly, the anecdotes of personal hardships endured by many of the artists awaken one's appreciation for their genuine commitment to their work, which is seldom met by just remuneration.

Although the catalogue is well written, clear, and visually opulent, the author might have softened his perspective on what the "Western" or non-Thai reader might or might not understand: "art of any culturally foreign tradition needs explaining" (p. 14). First, that particular wording might better be rephrased to "culturally challenging tradition" because "foreign" is too close to that pejorative term "alien," which at the very least polarizes the world between "us" and "them." If this were the only offensive instance, one could hardly object. But many of the author's assumptions are open to debate and perhaps should have been phrased less categorically. These include statements like Thai "classical art is an inherently uncreative enterprise" and "there is virtually no image [in the exhibit] that addresses either a universal or a Euroamerican issue in terms that are aesthetically or culturally self-evident" (pp. 19, 15). In the end, what art does not need some explanation to be completely understood, no matter where or when it originated? Contemporary Thai art is not alone in being misunderstood and misinterpreted by the misinformed.

Second, while still providing useful catalogue entries, Phillips should give the "Western" mind more credit for its ability to intuit and absorb the significance of the art shown here. Perhaps he should give the "Thai" mind less credit for omniscience. Unlike him I would insist that the Thai public in general is not better equipped by birthright to understand current Thai art ("Since most of these meanings are not apparent to Western viewers . . . but are to most Thai," p. 13). Similarly, in the catalogue entries especially, the artists' views on Buddhism or other issues related to their paintings should have been more clearly marked as *their* views to avoid confusion with the author's interpretations.

There are a few other inaccurate or questionable assertions in the text. For example, Thorani, the earth goddess, is not exactly comparable to our "Mother Earth." And after the Buddha's enlightenment, she certainly did not wash her hair, especially not to "rid it of evil" (p. 83)! If the author is referring to a popular belief, it should be noted how much this belief differs from the images of the goddess wringing from her hair all the ablution water spilled on the Buddha's hands in his past lifetimes. Readers also might take issue with the cryptic reference to "the darker side of Thai religious practice and belief" (p. 100). With no subsequent

explanation, we are left to infer whatever unspeakable visions we can conjure on our own. Voodoo? Demonology? If the author had explained this "darker side," it would have left the realm of imputation and gained in credibility.

Another questionable assertion concerns Thawan Duchanee's depiction of thinly disguised sodomy, which the author relates "to Thai Buddhist notions about the moral and biological unity of *man* and animals" (my emphasis, p. 12). Aside from the strange view of Buddhist "notions" presented here, it is a *woman* and an animal of sorts depicted in Thawan's grotesque parody of a *yab-yum* embrace. The text continues: the "bestial side of *man* is neither pleasant nor attractive," nor is "*man*'s inherent capacity for primitive, beast-like behavior." Such gender-biased language would have been easy to correct before publication. Or again, in the catalogue entry for Chalermchai Kositpipat's "The Nun" (pl. 48), the author notes that "The mountain tops in the background are close to Nirvana." Those mountains may be close to our failing ozone layer, but nirvana?

I do not mean to highlight minor errors or otherwise detract from the real value of the catalogue, with its excellent and varied selection of contemporary Thai art. Many of the above criticisms are overshadowed by the catalogue's virtues. Informative and comprehensive, it provides substantial background in most areas relevant to current Thai art. Among the many excellent works in the catalogue, Montien Boonma's "Black Stupa" (pl. 15) has a presence apparent even in a small reproduction. Wattana Wattanapun's "Black Hem" (pl. 44) and "Dewa and Apsara" (pl. 43) conjoin color and linear design in an irresistible aesthetic. Nonthiwat Chandhanaphalin's "Desire, Number 3" (pl. 52), with its liquid, flowing sensuality, seems magically to transform its own metallic medium. And I would happily add several other works to my own imaginary collection of Thai art.

Phillips defines contemporary Thai art as an integration of the classical tradition, the "folk" tradition, and the Euroamerican tradition. His definition reminds me of the image of "The Nun" by Chalermchai Kositpipat mentioned above. She stands with her feet in the past of broken temple ruins, her back turned to the urban world behind her, and her head framed in a halo of natural mountain landscape. She transcends and connects all of these elements by her purity and her stance. With her feet in the past, an umbrella in one hand and a lotus in the other, she integrates. *Nirvana* and *samsara*, past and present, classical, folk, or Euroamerican, she is at peace with it all. Similarly, the illustrations in the catalogue encourage our own integration of contemporary art, all the richer for this offering from Thailand.

ELEANOR MANNIKKA

*Master of the Lotus Garden: The Life and Art of Bada Shanren (1626–1705)*. By Wang Fangyu, Richard M. Barnhart, and Judith G. Smith, editor. 299 pp., numerous color and black and white illustrations, essays, catalogue, appendix of attributions, bibliography, indexes. New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1990. \$55.00 (hardback) \$39.95 (paper).

*Master of the Lotus Garden* is an ambitious attempt to come to grips with the life and career of an artist who, perhaps more than any other in China, has been emblematic of the cryptic and the obscure. Bada Shanren (1626–1705), also known as Zhu Da, has presented to scholars a series of interlocking puzzles, involving his very identity, his sanity, the significance of his powerful but often anomalous pictorial subjects, and the import of his poetic and other inscriptions, which harbor a seemingly private system of obscure allusions, colloquialisms, puns, and symbols. It is the chief and very considerable achievement of *Master of the Lotus Garden* to present Bada Shanren *whole*, with biography, psychological characterization, attributions, and interpretations of painting and poetry all taking part in an interlocking account of great elegance and considerable persuasiveness. While specific attributions and interpretations will certainly remain open to challenge and revision, this book offers at last a coherent framework and rich contexts from which further questions and research can proceed.

That *Master of the Lotus Garden* offers such a satisfyingly unified account is all the more remarkable in that the subject presents immense complexities, paralleled in the combination of essays, documentation, catalogue, and exhibition project in this coauthored work. Wang Fangyu wrote the long biographical and interpretive account of Bada's career and was mostly responsible for the illustrated appendices documenting signatures, seals, dated works, and letters attributed to the artist that add so markedly to the usefulness of this volume for scholars, for whom it will remain an indispensable and often-consulted resource. Richard Barnhart wrote the introductory essay and catalogue discussions of more than seventy works of painting and calligraphy. The contributions of Judith Smith, given equal billing as editor with the principal authors, are not individually specified but appear everywhere in the admirable clarity of organization and lucidity of presentation of an endlessly complex subject, qualities that extend even to such intrinsically unpromising topics as Bada's genealogical background. The book is a model of intelligent and productive collaboration, with additional contributions of translations and interpretations by several graduate students at Yale. Occasional traces of multiple voices and viewpoints emerge, as in the interpretation of the "imperial" seal on the *Portrait of Bada as Geshan*, which Barnhart sees as part of a claim of resumption of royal identity, while Wang emphasizes an expression of disenchantment with Buddhist



monastic life and a resolve to return to society as a poet and painter. These are productive frictions, however, which alert the reader to key points of interest. Another instance of overlapping concerns involves the discussions, by both principal authors, of Bada's episodes of eccentric and "mad" behavior as deliberate strategies of social avoidance and political disengagement. These seem to offer the most productive and resonant avenues for understanding such accounts, although this will probably remain an open and perhaps unresolvable issue.

Wang Fangyu's essay is the product of an extraordinary labor of scholarship over some decades, which has made him the largest contributor to Bada Shanren studies. His accounts of Bada's genealogical position and relationships, of the confusion of Bada's identity with others such as the Daoist priest Zhu Daolang, and of the chronological significance of Bada's signature forms are based on such firm command of currently available documentation and scholarship as to seem unimpeachable. Wang's discussion of Bada's poetry attempts to provide contexts of allusion for key images, with the advantage that these are tied into an ongoing account of the artist's life and work. Some of these interpretations are coherent and internally consistent; others provide a more tentative heuristic that may be subject to revision. There are other welcome themes in Wang's account. The discussions of Bada's domestic life and sexuality offer new dimensions of understanding for an artist whose works so often embody unresolved tensions of various kinds; at the same time they release this account from the odd reticence surrounding themes of desire that has for so long affected studies of cultivated Chinese arts.

Barnhart's interpretations of individual poems and paintings are formulated around the themes announced in his introductory essay and emphasize the personal significance of a wide symbolic repertoire. Bada's paintings, then, are seen principally in terms of an ongoing narrative of self, with surrogate figures—fish, birds, animals, even rocks and landscapes—taking part in a drama of loyalist regret and alienation. This is in many respects a persuasive and reasonable account, supported by many individual readings of poems and imagery, sometimes ingeniously complete, at other times broadly stated with less secure basis. This interpretive strategy, though occasionally verging on the solipsistic, seems broadly suited to the case of Bada Shanren: surely no other Chinese artist was more self-absorbed, based on a background of imperial status, a psychology of self-imposed isolation (whether or not intermittently actually disturbed), and an intellect that favored intricate self-referential puzzles. There are, however, some problems with the extension of this mode of interpretation to virtually all of Bada's painting oeuvre. It seems possible to distinguish the often cryptic and self-referential early- and middle-period works from the works of Bada's last decade, after 1694. These are marked by changes in signature and thematics, with a

predominance of new subjects, such as landscapes, birds of prey, deer, or geese and reeds. These late works frequently bear perfunctory inscriptions and dedications, or none at all, and compositions are often repeated with little variation. These qualities would seem to signal primarily functional pictures, suggesting that their significance lay not so much in self-reference as in some broader social communications and purposes. Whether this routinization of production and significance may have applied in some ways even to subjects such as fish and rocks, which were also produced in some quantities, is an open question but one that deserves some fuller consideration.

The frequent repetition of compositions—some of them, particularly in the late period, virtually multiple versions—also raises some questions about the attribution of paintings included in the catalogue. These are drawn mostly from American collections, with a sprinkling of images from Japan, Europe, and elsewhere. The illustrated appendix of dated, published attributions in the end matter of *Master of the Lotus Garden* documents the pattern of multiple versions, but the text of the catalogue treats all the assembled paintings, which also exhibit some stylistic diversity, as if they are of unproblematic authenticity. It would be ungenerous to a work that combines learning and sensibility so effectively to conclude with an open-ended questioning of attributions, but these issues seem rather evaded in this book and are certainly not finally resolved. However, it is a measure of the importance and high standards of this project that it provides some of the evidence and terms for its own critique in a characteristically meticulously documented appendix. This is just one example among many of the value of this work for future research.

RICHARD VINOGRAD

*The Painting of T'ang Yin.* By Anne De Coursey Clapp. 300 pp., preface, notes, bibliography, 7 color plates, 94 figures, two appendices, notes, bibliography. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991. \$49.95.

Anne Clapp has written an important book, but her claims for it are modest. Simply stated, her aim is not to treat T'ang Yin's work as a whole, which she reserves for a *catalogue raisonné* when more is known, but to offer a selective frame from which "the reader will be able to understand works which are omitted" (p. xviii). Claiming lack of available originals, the author regrettably does not include figure painting, although it does later intrude into the landscape theme. There is little question, however, but that she is absorbed in her subject. Exemplary for her careful research, the author reveals

an easy confidence established through a period of years and a long-standing commitment to Ming painting in Suchou. Her study of T'ang Yin is a natural outgrowth of earlier studies on Wen Cheng-ming.

As in those writings, her organization is clear. It begins with what may be gleaned of T'ang Yin's life: a background in trade yet friendship with cultural giants of the scholarly upper class (Shen Chou, Wen Cheng-ming, Chu Yün-ming), brilliant early success in the examination system, the equally sudden but traumatic fall in its final scandal-marred stages in Peking and return to Suchou presumably to try to accommodate a scarred life to a critically hostile social milieu. The author treats the famous "crime" in some detail: accusation, trial, inconclusive sentences ("not harsh enough for real fraud and too harsh for innocence," p. 7), a fine, rescinding of the *chü-jen* degree, and the consolation of a provincial clerk appointment, which T'ang Yin indignantly refused, his private claim of innocence preserved in a letter to Wen Cheng-ming.

The certainty of exile, however, is strongly countered by "scholarly" behavior. Sometime between 1505 and 1507 T'ang Yin left his home near the marketplace to establish his own retreat on T'ao-hua hill to the northwest, not far, we are told, from Wen Cheng-ming, Chu Yün-ming, and Wang Ch'ung. His house was named T'ao-hua an and his studio, Meng-mo t'ing. He also cut a library seal, *Hsüeh-pu t'ang*. Except in 1514 when he accepted a brief, ill-fated royal patronage at Nan-ch'ang under Chu Ch'en-hao, the Prince of Ning, T'ang Yin's world was Suchou. The subsequent discussion of T'ang's intellectual milieu only reinforces his scholarly credentials. At a time when Wang Yang-ming was beginning to rise in importance, the evidence suggests T'ang was essentially committed to what is described as an established middle-Ming syncretism.

The next section identifies T'ang Yin's patrons. His major benefactor was Wang Ao, the prominent Ming statesman and Suchou native who served various posts in Peking, including that of imperial tutor and ultimately grand secretary, from 1475 to 1509, when he returned permanently to his native East Tung-t'ing Mountain on Lake T'ai. T'ang's relationship with another patron, the great collector Hua Yün (1488–1560), dated from 1507 and resulted in a still-extant album, *Long Days in the Quiet Mountains* (Chen collection, Taipei), completed in 1519 as illustrations of a thirteenth-century text. The text was later written out by Wang Yang-ming. Professor Clapp concludes, "There could be no better assurance that T'ang Yin was accepted among the Suchou elite as one of their own" (p. 43). There are also paintings that suggest payment to physicians, as well as relations to a merchant family named Chang who by the third generation had risen to "the pinnacle of literati society" in the circle of Wen Cheng-ming's sons (p. 44). Finally, there is the undefined but logically assumed "public market."

Already having discussed several paintings, the author now leads us more directly to the art itself, which

she categorizes by subject and purpose. Under the rubric "Commemorative Painting" she takes up paintings of social interchange closely linked to personal history. Initiated by the recipient as a direct commission, these works were usually composite efforts of calligraphy, poetry, and painting later endorsed by further colophons. In such scrolls there was an especially close association between Chu Yün-ming and his friend T'ang Yin. Combing records, the author has found many (fifty-seven), predominately in the short handscroll format (forty), all conveniently listed in an appendix, where they are subdivided into the following groups, with selected examples discussed: anniversary, elegy, memorials of accomplishment, travel, portraits in a landscape, the private house or retreat. Such scrolls indicate a rich association among artists, in which T'ang Yin was included as early as 1486 at the age of sixteen.

"Portraits in a Landscape" is singled out as an especially significant category in this genre. Now the sources of the painter's style in the Sung Academy, and more precisely, Li T'ang, receive serious attention. A rare example of Ma Yuan's influence is seen in *Rocky Shore* (collection unknown), although its vivacity is said to be the artist's own. Another influence is Shen Chou, found in T'ang's 1505 *Journey to the South* in the Freer Gallery, although Shen's impact can be seen in other subjects much earlier. At the same time we are alerted to T'ang Yin's own "corrugated pattern and drawing of the hills" (p. 76). A more significant influence can be found in the work of a second Suchou artist, Chou Ch'en, for instance in the motif of the wind-blown tree.

However molded as "anonymous type forms," portraits were influenced by Li Kung-lin. Examples include portraits of Wang Ao in 1506 and 1509, as well as a remarkable rendering of an unidentified "Meng-yun" (Tokyo National Museum), where the landscape is said to be a thorough integration of the Li T'ang style. T'ang Yin himself is placed in the hanging scroll of about 1519, *Talking with Hsi-chou* (Palace Museum, Taipei), where the hut is identified as his T'ao-hua pavilion. Professor Clapp maintains that this type of portrait, though much favored by Wen Cheng-ming, was T'ang Yin's invention—an invention she characterizes as "elliptical realism," "less logically complete than the Sung, more evocative of human feeling and less matter-of-fact than the Che school" (p. 100). The subject of tea-tasting becomes an interesting variation of the theme, as in *The Bamboo Stove* (Art Institute, Chicago).

Sources of influence on landscapes are similar: Li T'ang and Liu Sung-nien, with some more distant roots in Li Ch'eng and Ching-Kuan (Ching Hao and Kuan T'ung) and in contemporary Suchou the art of Chou Ch'en (a kind of screen for Sung influence) and Shen Chou. More unique is the soft and delicate Taipei Palace Museum masterpiece, *Farming in Chiang-nan* (revival of an ancient Sung form). Shen Chou's influence is early, in *Twin Pines* and a *Waterfall* from the same



collection and *Cedar Tree in Autumn Frost* from Tientsin, the first datable painting (1500) after the examination scandal.

The relationship to Li T'ang inevitably involves his other prominent Suchou follower, Chou Ch'en. In placing an undated Four Seasons series in Shanghai between 1502 and 1508, the author generally follows Chiang Chao-shen, just as she does later in giving the well-known *Dreaming of Immortality* in the Freer Gallery to T'ang Yin rather than to Chou Ch'en. She carefully analyzes the previously unpublished *Chiu-ch'u River*, now in the Norton Gallery in West Palm Beach, as a leading example of the Li T'ang style and discusses the masterpiece *Sound of the Pines* in Taipei, datable to 1515–17 because it honors a retiring magistrate of Wu.

Tree and flower subjects occupy another interesting chapter. Conclusions are brought together in a section devoted to how T'ang Yin was viewed by later critics. In presenting the enigma of where to "place" T'ang Yin in the Ming world, the author stresses the significance of a Suchou environment invigorated by class mobility. The artist's professionalism was both fostered and transcended by his adoption into the literati caste. We should thus evaluate Ming taste as accepting a broad scope of styles. Literati ideals flourished among both the elite and those rising to it from more humble status. While T'ang Yin's relation to a shadowy "public market" must be accepted, it is difficult to define. On one rare occasion he complained of its meager financial rewards (p. 45).

All this is revealing, yet the reader must agree with the author's caveat about her "unevennesses and asymmetries" (p. xvi), which she defines thus: "I do not argue that all aspects of the artist's life shown here directly affected his painting" (p. xvii). This is particularly true of the patrons she has taken such pains to illuminate: "The present study of one professional oeuvre indicates only that the patron had much to say about the subject, and may have specified it quite exactly. But it does not show, indeed could not show, that he dictated style. The formal means of adapting the style to the subject . . . was something only the artist could imagine" (p. 234).

Professor Clapp is her own best critic, and further studies should develop along these lines. It is difficult to believe that the consummate rebel, T'ang Yin, rejected by scholarly officialdom yet still fired by his own genius, strove excessively hard to "please" anybody. Like any great artist, he painted within, not because of, the framework of his contemporary world, painting the reality he saw. On the matter of portraiture, while we must assume that he was not averse to pleasing a patron, his much-praised invention must have rested on his wish that his subjects understand how he saw them and his insistence that through unique imagery he was rediscovering the subject's self. Where, for example, is the evidence that Wang Ao, T'ang's "most prominent and faithful patron," admired the Li T'ang mode before T'ang Yin painted it with such inventive creativity?

A clear sign of this creativity is nowhere more exactly evident than in his painting of the famous lute player, Yang Chi-ching. Portrayed in the 1505 *Journey to the South*, he is the stiff traveler, stoical on his donkey-mount, headed along the uncertain road of common commerce, a road here blocked by the abrupt barrier of a sharp cliff. A bit of elaborate architecture suggests a temporary refuge, but otherwise he faces a hidden, uncertain prospect in the worldly Nanking metropolis. In *The Lute Master* the image is transformed. He is seated in the ideal world of nature with congenial attendants, lute across his knees, completely attuned to rock, tree, and distant prospect. Further, the first image of travel is a far cry from the optimism of the more stereotypical departure scene depicted for the official Cheng Ch'u-ch'ih, sometime after 1498, in *Farewell at Chin-ch'ang*—a host of friends in bowing gestures of departure at the boat landing, a sail being raised, the openness of distance and its secure implications of a calm voyage to eminence and fortune in Peking. This iconography can be found at least as early as the late Sung. In sum, artists are not there as passive mirrors of common understanding. They are there to shatter mirrors and create new vision.

Indeed T'ang Yin appears to have done just that, both in the marketplace and among the literati. He deliberately abandoned the "style" of Shen Chou—a manner used in a few early works and here called "marketable" (p. 233)—in favor of a Li T'ang, Liu Sung-nien mode. This he did not just for commerce, as is often assumed, but to serve in the heart of collective "literati" works. Is he not, then, telling those with scholarly aspirations to widen their vision? One of the most important conclusions one must draw from this study is that T'ang Yin lived among the community of scholars and that no significant shifts in style earned him that acceptance.

An added pleasure of the book is a quality of writing that illuminates the author's certainty of T'ang Yin's creativity. Sometimes there are key phrases: "elliptical realism" (p. 100), "pendulum movement" (p. 178), or a "Ming ideal of conspicuous seclusion" (p. 187). Or eloquence may emerge in a particular passage, as in: "The energy of line passes continuously from one form to another in a buoyant musical tide sweeping through the whole picture" (p. 182).

Another significant aspect of the study is the authority with which T'ang Yin's stylistic origins are analyzed, both in literary sources and in surviving paintings. Notable among the former is the now-lost Liu Sung-nien scroll, *Lu T'ung Making Tea*, which carried a colophon by T'ang Yin, suggesting that it influenced his highly praised *Serving Tea* (now in Peking) as well as *The Lute Master*. Still, other influences are at work in both of these scrolls. *Serving Tea*, we are told, pays homage to Kuo Hsi (in foreground rocks presented in a dramatic repoussoir manner far outstripping the Sung), and a model for *The Lute Master* is to be found in an anonymous hanging scroll from Taipei attributed to the Sung.

The greater number of surviving works cited, however, are not originals but reflections of originals, anonymous period attributions, or later works to which famous names have been attached. We have a "Follower of Ma Yuan" (fig. 15), a *Snowscape* attributed to Li T'ang (fig. 53), *Mist and Rain on the River in Spring* attributed to Chao Ling-jiang (fig. 62), a "Kao K'oming" (fig. 66). To these I would add the beautiful album-leaf, *Sitting on the Rocks. Watching the Clouds* (fig. 7), here given to Li T'ang himself. To this viewer, the very excitement of its mannerisms indicates a date beyond the twelfth century, closer to the borderline of Sung and Yuan. And in T'ang Yin's animated fan, *Wind in the Pines and Flowing Streams* of 1521 from the Hua collection in Taipei, one might see a possible relation to another copy, that of a Liu Sung-nien design misattributed to Li Sung (Palace Museum, Taipei VA16g). The comparative significance lies in the two pines and the way they embrace a partially concealed figure, as well as the corner composition. Finally, T'ang Yin's *The Ko-feng Tower* of 1506 might be seen as a conclusive transformation of the precise, tight Yen Tzu-p'ing fan painting now in Taipei's Palace Museum, *Villa by the Pine Path* (VA14f). This is particularly intriguing since a copy of the Sung painting exists in the Freer Gallery with an alleged T'ang Yin seal.

This use of modes, as opposed to the direct translation of original styles, suggests a broader approach to Ming painting in Suchou. By T'ang Yin's time the understanding of the past had undergone considerable change. Even then, genuine early works were relatively few, and early styles were readily transformed into traditions, or modes. The trend is clearest with the styles most in accord with literati ideals, especially in the Tung-Chü tradition, a mode appropriated and reinvented by major Yuan artists, who in turn provided the screen through which Shen Chou and Wen Cheng-ming established a main thrust of Suchou painting. Should not T'ang Yin be seen in a similar light? Al-

though not readily assimilable to continuing literati theory, Sung academic styles—Li T'ang, Ma Yuan, Hsia Kuei, Liu Sung-nien—were certainly seen not just in the purity of originals but in an enduring tradition including countless anonymous works, some with valid attributions—Sun Chun-tzu, for example, or Kuo Hsi through T'ang Ti. At any rate the tradition of "Li T'ang" and his followers must have continued in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and this tradition, while introducing variants, would have helped T'ang Yin create his own inventions within the mode. As we learn more about the mode in the Yuan and early Ming, T'ang Yin's contribution will be clearer.

Finally, an editing, or perhaps more justly, an economic comment. The quality of the plates does not measure up to the quality of the text. But careful reproductions cost money and publishers seldom realize (or can realize) that the visual aspect of such books must equal the quality of the written word. Despite a welcome appendix that includes original passages of Chinese text and a bibliography that also includes Chinese, a complete glossary would have been more than a convenience. When footnotes are broken into chapters and placed together at the end of the book, the chapter number should be included at the top of every page. We still need that *catalogue raisonné*. Hopefully, we can count on Professor Clapp to supply it. No one is better suited to the task.

RICHARD EDWARDS

#### Correction

In Yasser Tabbaa's article in volume 21, "The Transformation of Arabic Writing: Part I, Qur'anic Calligraphy," fig. 7 is misidentified and misplaced. The caption should read: "Double folio in *thuluth* from an Eastern Kūfic Qur'ān . . ." It is referred to in n. 58.

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# CONTENTS OF *ARS ORIENTALIS*, VOLUMES 12–21

## Volume 12

- Yoshiaki Shimizu, Seasons and Places in Yamato Landscape and Poetry  
 Marianna Shreve Simpson, The Narrative Structure of a Medieval Iranian Beaker  
 Martin J. Powers, An Archaic Bas-Relief and the Chinese Moral Cosmos in the First Century A.D.  
 Pratapaditya Pal, Early Paintings of the Goddess in Nepal  
 Donald M. Stadtner, The Siddheśvara Temple at Palāri and the Art of Kosala during the Seventh and Eighth Centuries  
 Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., Tantric Buddhism at Angkor Thom  
 Ellen Johnston Laing, Evidence for Two Possible Sasanian Rugs Depicted in Tun-Huang Murals of A.D. 642

## Volume 13

- Richard Vinograd, Family Properties: Personal Context and Cultural Pattern in Wang Meng's *Pien Mountains* of 1366  
 Louise Yuhas, Lu Chih and the Literati Tradition: Paintings in the Style of Ni Tsan  
 Lynda A. Zycherman, Technical Examination of Two Owl-Shaped *Tsun*  
 Marianna Shreve Simpson, The Production and Patronage of the *Haft Aurang* by Jāmī in the Freer Gallery of Art  
 Milo Cleveland Beach, The Mughal Painter Daswanth  
 Rekha Morris, Some Additions to the Known Corpus of Paintings by the Mughal Artist Farrukh Chela  
 Thomas Donaldson, Ekapāda Śiva Images in Orissan Art  
 Michael W. Meister, Bīthū: Individuality and Idiom

## Volume 14

- Richard Edwards, Pu-tai-Maitreya and a Reintroduction to Hangzhou's Fei-lai-feng  
 Angela Falco Howard, The Monumental "Cosmological Buddha" in the Freer Gallery of Art: Chronology and Style  
 Carol Garrett Fisher, A Reconstruction of the Pictorial Cycle of the *Siyar-i Naḥ* of Murād III  
 Julie Badié, The Sarre Qazwīnī: An Early Aq Qoyunlu Manuscript?  
 Robert L. Brown, Indra's Heaven: A *Dharmacakra* in the Bangkok National Museum

## Volume 15

- Julia K. Murray, Ts'ao Hsün and Two Southern Sung History Scrolls  
 Michael L. Browne, Portraits of Foreigners by Kawahara Keiga  
 Carol Radcliffe Bolon, The Durga Temple, Aihole, and the Saṅgameśvara Temple, Kūḍavelli: A Sculptural Review  
 Geri Hockfield Malandra, Ellora: The "Archaeology" of a Maṇḍala  
 Walter M. Spink, Ajanta's Chronology: Solstitial Evidence  
 Terry Allen, Byzantine Sources for the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* of Rashīd al-Dīn

## Volume 16

- Carolyn Wheelwright, Tōhaku's Black and Gold  
 Albert E. Dien, The Stirrup and Its Effect on Chinese Military History  
 Ellen Johnston Laing, Ch'ing Dynasty Pictorial Jades and Painting  
 John C. Huntington, A Note on Dunhuang Cave 17, "The Library," or Hong Bian's Reliquary Chamber  
 Suresh Vasant, A Little-Known *Caitiya* Hall at Junnar  
 John Seyller, The School of Oriental and African Studies *Anvār-i Suhaylī*: The Illustration of a *de luxe* Mughal Manuscript  
 Paul E. Chevedden, A Sāmānid Tombstone from Nishāpūr

## Volume 17

- Melinda Takeuchi, Kuniyoshi's Miamoto Raikō and the Earth Spider: Demons and Protest in Late Tokugawa Japan  
 Mary H. Fong, T'ang Line-engraved Stone Reliefs from Shensi  
 Hou-mei Sung Ishida, Early Ming Painters in Nanking and the Formation of the Wu School  
 Donald M. Stadtner, Medieval Narrative Sculpture and Three Kṛṣṇa Panels  
 John Stratton Hawley, Krishna and the Birds  
 Gary J. Schwindler, Speculations on the Theme of Śiva as Tripurāntaka as It Appears during the Reign of Rājārā I in the Tanjore Area ca. A.D. 1000

## Volume 18

- Priscilla Soucek, The New York Public Library *Makhzan al-asrār* and Its Importance  
 Marilyn Jenkins, Fātimid Jewelry, Its Subtypes and Influences  
 Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, Imperial Architecture along the Mongolian Road to Dadu  
 Julia K. Murray, The *Ladies' Classic of Filial Piety* and Sung Textual Illustration: Problems of Reconstruction and Artistic Context  
 Deborah Del Gais Muller, Hsia Wen-yen and His *T'u-hui pao-chien* (*Precious Mirror of Painting*)  
 Chi Chien Wang and Kathleen Yang, The Mystery of the *Chang Seal*  
 Patricia Fister, The Impact of Shugendō on the Painting of Yokoi Kinkoku  
 Pratapaditya Pal, The Chowrie-Bearing Goddess on the Aśvamedha Type of Samudragupta's Coin

## Volume 19

- Frederick Asher and Walter Spink, Maurya Figural Sculpture Reconsidered  
 Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., The Lakṣmaṇa Temple, Khajuraho, and Its Meanings  
 Edward L. Shaughnessy, The Role of Grand Protector Shi in the Consolidation of the Zhou Conquest  
 Hidemi Kondō, Shen Nanpin's Japanese Roots  
 Glenn D. Lowry, On the Gold Jug Inscribed to Abu Mansur al-Amir Bakhtiyar ibn Mu'izz al-Dawla in the Freer Gallery of Art

## Volume 20

- Stanley K. Abe, Art and Practice in a Fifth-Century Chinese Buddhist Cave Temple  
 Peter C. Sturman, Cranes above Kaifeng: The Auspicious Image at the Court of Huizong  
 Hui-shu Lee, The Fish Leaves of the Anwan Album: Bada Shanren's Journeys to a Landscape of the Past  
 Mary F. Linda, The Kaliniga Temple Form  
 Estelle Whelan, Writing the Word of God: Some Early Qur'ān Manuscripts and Their Milieux, Part I  
 Robert Hillenbrand, Mamlūk and Īlkhānid Bestiaries: Convention and Experiment

## Volume 21

- M. B. Garrison, Seals and the Elite at Persepolis: Some Observations on Early Achaemenid Persian Art  
 Judith Lerner, A Rock Relief of Fath 'Alī Shāh in Shiraz  
 Vidya Dehejia, Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems  
 Walter M. Spink, The Archaeology of Ajaṇṭa  
 Audrey Spiro, Shaping the Wind: Taste and Tradition in Fifth-Century South China  
 Yasser Tabbaa, The Transformation of Arabic Writing: Part I, Qur'ānic Calligraphy





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